

PSY2SOC KEY KNOWLEDGE

Week 1: What is Social Psychology?

- Hindsight Bias
 - Hindsight bias is defined as the belief that an event is more predictable after it becomes known than it was before it became known
 - Sometimes termed 'the knew it all along' effect and involves the inability to recapture the feeling of uncertainty that preceded an event.
- Social Psychology
 - Study of how people think, feel and behave in a social context
 - Focusses on the individual
 - Focusses on Kurt Lewin's theory: behaviour is a function of the person and the environment
 - Follows the ABC model (Affect, Behaviour, and Cognition).
- 2 Fundamental Axioms of Social Psychology
 - Construction of reality
 - What we experience as "real" is our own construction- two people may experience quite different realities based on expectations, motives, group memberships and cultural differences.
 - Pervasiveness of Social Influence
 - Our inner most private thoughts are shaped by:
 - Thoughts about other's reactions
 - Social group memberships
 - Learned beliefs
- 5 Core Social Motives (BUCET)
 - Belonging
 - People need strong stable relationships with others
 - Understanding
 - People need to make sense of reality and predict what will happen next
 - Controlling
 - People need to feel competent and effective in dealing with the social environment
 - Enhancing Self
 - People need to feel good about themselves or that they can improve themselves
 - Trusting
 - People need to see the social world as a kind place
- 3 Processing Principles (CAS)
 - Conservatism
 - Individual and group views of the world are slow to change
 - Accessibility
 - What we are already thinking about is most noticeable in a situation
 - Superficiality vs. Depth
 - Sometimes we rely on accessible information, other times we process information more extensively (when we care about the issue [motivation to process], when we have time and the resources to think [ability to process]).
- Birth and Infancy of Social Psychology
 - 1880s–1920s
 - Norman Triplett (1898): compared children windingup fishing line when competing against others and alone against the clock.

- Max Ringleman (1880s/1913): compared people pulling on a rope alone or in a group
- 1930s–1950s
 - The rise of the Nazis focused research on prejudice, intergroup conflict, social influence, conformity, obedience to authority, contradictions between beliefs and behaviours.
- Kurt Lewin's 1951 field theory
 - Proposed that behaviours are enabled by driving forces and inhibited by restraining forces in the life space.
- Confidence and Crisis 1960s–1970s
 - Worries about Unethical Studies Emerged
 - Milgram's Studies of Obedience
 - Stanford Prison Study
 - Worries about the Validity of Experimental Studies Emerged
 - Experimenter Bias (Rosenthal)
 - Generalizability (Gergen)
- An Era of Pluralism 1970s–1990s
 - Adoption of pluralism
 - Acceptance of many methods of investigation in addition to the laboratory experiment.
 - Integration of both hot and cold perspectives in the study of the determinants of our thoughts and actions
 - Development of international and multicultural perspectives
- History of Social Thinker
 - The Naïve Scientist (pre 1970s)
 - Uses all available information in a logical manner
 - The Cognitive Miser (1970s & 1980s)
 - Has limited cognitive resources, therefore must use shortcuts, snap judgments and educated guesses.
 - Often influenced by automatic and unconscious processes
 - Motivated Tactician (1990s & today)
 - Bias by own goals, desires, attitudes and self-perceptions
 - Able to direct attention and effort to overcome some cognitive biases

Week 2: Doing Social Psychology Research

- What is a scientific theory?
 - Statement about constructs (anxiety or self-esteem)
 - Describes the causal relationships amongst constructs
 - Is general in scope
- Measuring Variables
 - Self-report
 - Participants disclose their thoughts, feelings, desires and actions
 - Observations
 - Technology
 - Computers, reaction time, physiological measures and brain imaging
- Validity
 - Construct Validity