

Week 1

Personality:

- Individual differences in behaviour
- Consistency across different situations

Social psychology:

- Reactions to situational influences

What is social psychology?

The **scientific investigation** of how the **thoughts, feelings, and behaviours** of individuals are influenced by the **actual, imagined or implied presence of others**.

- Imagined others
 - Blinded folded participants pulled harder when they knew they were pulling alone
- Implied others
 - Rigdon, et al
 - Only 25% elected to keep it all themselves

Why put them together?

- Social and personality may seem quite different but...
 - They each draw on many of the same theories
 - Research usually incorporates both situational manipulations together with individual difference measures
 - They each concern the science of how we think, feel and relate to one another

Criticism

- Social and personality research describes the obvious....
 - Some research findings: all false
 1. When it comes to interpersonal attraction "opposites attract"
 2. Lottery winners are happier: their new wealth allows them to satisfy levels in Maslow's hierarchy
 3. Olympic silver medallists take more joy in their achievement than do bronze medallists: 2nd is a greater than 3rd
 4. Sad people are less accurate than happy people: pessimists are always thinking of the worst
 5. People tend to underestimate the extent to which other people share their opinions and attitudes- we think we are unique or special

Common-sense vs. science

Does social and personality psychology just document the obvious?

- We all have common-sense views of personality and social psychology
 - Based on personal experience
 - But common sense is sometimes & sometimes wrong
- Hindsight bias: I knew it all along

How is the scientific approach better than common sense?

- We often don't have any insight into why we act the we do
 - Carefully crafted psychological experiments can isolate the true causes of behaviour
- Unlike common sense, the scientific method has a built in rubbish safeguard

- Scientific theories are falsifiable because they can be tested by publicly verifiable observations

1. Introduction to personality theory

- “everyone, it seems, knows what personality is, but no one can precisely describe it: hundreds of definitions are available”

Definitions

- “Personality is a particular pattern of behaviour & thinking that prevails across time & situations that differentiates one person from another”
- “Personality may be defined as the underlying causes within the person of individual behaviour & experience”

Personality theories: common factors

- Personality theories tend to address both : human nature (general factors) and individuality (specific factors)
- Psychopathology
 - Psycho: psychological
 - Pathos: disease/disorder/suffering
- Personality research emerged out of ‘abnormal psychology’
- Understanding how our personalities can break down
- Implications for therapy
- Helping us to understand what is necessary for mental health

Idiographic Vs Nomothetic

Idiographic	Nomothetic
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on the individual and recognition of uniqueness. • Private, subjective and conscious experiences. • Investigations gain written information unique to individual being studied 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attempts to establish laws & generalisations about people. • Objective knowledge through scientific methods. • Investigations gain numerical data or data that can be categorised.

Theories of humanity

- Personality theories aim to understand the ‘whole’ person rather than simply the ‘parts’
- ‘Personality’ as an attempted synthesis of other areas of psychology
 - E.g. perception, neuroscience, human development, motivation

2. Conceptual issues

Causes of personality

- Nature vs nurture
- Nature: what we are like by nature prior to environmental influences
 - E.g. genetics, biological needs
- Nurture: how the environment nurtures us. All environmental influences
 - E.g. social factors, cultural factors

Questions:

- Personality differences?
- Violence & aggression?
- Psychopathology?

Answers:

- important for child-rearing, psychotherapy, social planning
- However, there is a blur between where nature & nurture begin & end

Free-will vs determinism

- Determinism
 - Everything (including our behaviour & thoughts) is caused by *antecedent* (prior) conditions
- Free-will
 - The **choices** that we make are not bound by causal conditions
 - In exactly the same circumstances we could *do otherwise*
 - E.g. the choice between doing right or wrong is entirely a personal decision (*moral responsibility*)

3. Personality research

Personality research & science

- Trying to discover what is the case
- Humans are prone to error
- **Critical appraisal**
 - Subjecting beliefs/theories to criticism
 - Two kinds of criticism: *logical & empirical*
- Logical: testing logical coherence of theories
 - Theoretical/conceptual analysis
 - Identifying contradictions, hidden assumptions, vagueness, ambiguity
- Empiricism: observation is essential to science
 - Determining whether observations supports a theory or not
- Qualitative and quantitative data
 - What is the best method for observing & studying personality?
 - *This partly depends upon what is meant by 'personality'; idiographic/nomothetic approaches*

Methods of assessment

- Early & present personality research
- In-depth study of a single person
 - E.g. Phineas Gage (1840s)
- Rare cases
- Researcher (subjective) bias?
- N=1; Applicability to other cases (*generalisability*)?
- These may provide sources for further hypotheses
- Clinical/counselling application
- Self-report questionnaires
 - Objective tests (true false)
 - Deception, insight, bias

- Projective tests
 - Ambiguous stimuli: individual interpretations reveal aspects of their personality
 - Thematic appreciation test
 - Rosenzweig P-F study
 - Rorschach 'inkblots'
 - Problems
 - Problem of score interpretation, reliability & validity
- Physiological measures
 - E.g. brain research → PET, fMRI
- Genetic testing
 - Problem : we must know what is meant by 'personality' before we can say how brain factors & genetics relates to it

Problems associated with personality research

- Definitions of personality
- Testability? Can we test human nature?
- Most theories have some empirical support, so which one is right?
- Multiple theories/multiple facets?
- Multiple levels of explanations?
- eg. biological vs psychological

Further considerations

- ethnocentrism
- Are our theories universal or reflections of specific cultures?
- Egocentrism
 - Are our theories reflections of ourselves?
 - How do our own experiences as persons influence our understanding of personality?
 - If I haven't experienced something then...?
 - Potential bias or an important source of information?

Week 2 Psychodynamic approaches since Freud

1. Psychoanalytic theory

- Personality:
 - Id → instinctual drives e.g. hunger, thirst. Biological components
 - Ego → sense of self fulfil various drives. Determines whether something is real or not
 - Superego → sense of morality
- Unconscious & conscious mind
- Defence mechanisms
- Psychosexuality

Current psychodynamic approaches

- *Pluralism*: Anywhere between 12 - 20 psychoanalytic schools
- Each school emphasises &/or rejects various elements in Freud's theory
- Problems with pluralism
 - *Unified methodology*: generally qualitative/clinical approaches
 - E.g. case studies

Post-Freudian developments

- Ego psychology
 - Emphasis on ego rather than Id

- Object relations approaches
 - Emphasis on relationships rather than drives
 - Attachment theory
 - Mentalisation & theory of mind
 - Neuropsychanalysis
 - Affective neuroscience
2. Ego psychology
- Accepts id theory but places central role on **ego**
 - Emphasis on **person**-(social)environment relation in the here-&-now
 - Emphasis on ego's function & strengths/weaknesses (eg resilience)
 - **Anna Freud: *Ego & the mechanisms of defence***
 - **Erik Erikson: *Psychosocial stage theory***
 - **Heinz Hartmann: *Ego functions & adaptation***

Hartmann's ego psychology

- 'Rider': *Drive-autonomous ego functions*
- Greater emphasis on **conscious** (cognitive processes) over unconscious processes
- Greater focus on **normal** rather than pathological development (*growth*)
- Defense mechanisms & **coping**
- **Ego strengths & adaptive functioning**
 - Adapting to our day to day lives
- Freud: ego not present at birth
 - Start life at id
- Hartmann: in-born 'ego functions':
 - *Reality testing, Impulse control, judgement, defence & coping strategies, Synthetic function & self-representation (Identity), cognitive & perceptual processes (eg. memory)*
- Ego's function: **adapting person's internal needs to the environment**

Ego psychology

- **Therapy**: strengthening the ego
 - develop coping strategies
 - **Healthy ego**: 'conflict free sphere' of the ego
 - Don't feel guilt of who individual is
 - Acting without conflict/better adjustment
 - Recent developments
 - Integration with evolutionary perspectives
 - Ego as biopsychological processing system → help us survive and reproduce
 - Criticisms:
 - Not enough attention paid to socialisation
3. Object relational approaches
- Freud (1915): we satisfy drives via 'objects' (eg. Food, love object)
 - *Cupboard-love theory* (2° drive)
 - Learn to love objects that satisfy our basic needs
 - **Object relations approach**:
 - Move away from drives
 - Greater emphasis on the 'person'
 - Innate desire for relationship
 - Early relationships shape the mind & personality
- a) **Fairbairn's object relational approach**
- **Fairbairn (1952)**: Critical of impersonal drives; rejects 'impulse' (id), biological psychology
 - **Libido is object seeking**

- "... relationship with the object, & not the gratification of impulse, is the ultimate aim of libidinal striving"
- Primary aim of personality is to form relationships

Fairbairn's model of personality

- 'Central ego' at birth
 - Sense of personhood
 - Has needs for relations → if its met it leads to positive integrated development of personality
 - In not met due to parents behaviour resulting in child consistently → split happens in ego
 - Needy part of personality shuts off → Libidinal ego
 - If develops long enough → anti-libidinal ego develops = aggressive towards relationship
- Frustrating object relations lead to repression
- Repression causes splits in the ego
- *Central ego, Libidinal ego, Anti-libidinal ego*
- Schizoid states
 - People who pervasively don't want to develop relationships with others

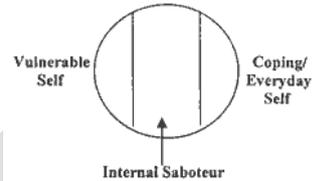


Figure 2
Further Splitting of the Ego

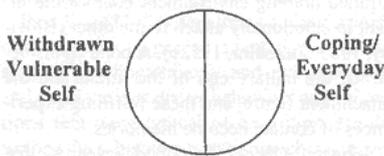
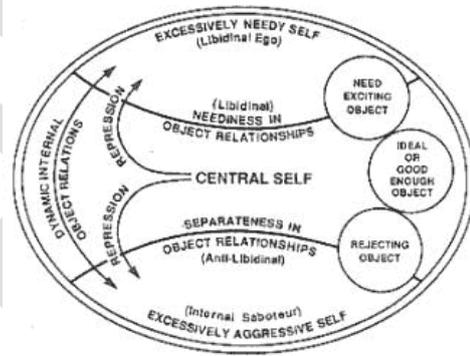
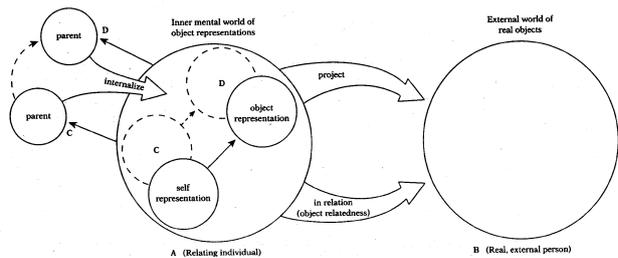


Figure 1
Initial Splitting of the Ego



Fragmented ego & internal objects

- Ogden (1983): object relations theory "is ... fundamentally a theory of unconscious internal object relations in dynamic interplay with current interpersonal experience"
- *Internal = Intrapersonal*
- We internalise relationships
- Introjects & internal world
 - Become internalised as parts of our mind
- Object relations within a single personality system



b) Mentalisation & object relations

- *Mentalisation*: the capacity to understand ourselves & others in terms of mental states
- Analysis of 750 cases from Anna Freud centre
- Relationships are essential for learning about one's own & others' minds

Intersubjective origin of self

- *We find our own minds in the minds of our caregivers*
- **Mirroring** helps child organise experience & know what is being felt
 - **E.g.** anxiety, anger
- Development of *subjectivity*
- Development of self-object differentiation
- Containment

- "... involves the presence of another being who not only reflects the infant's internal state, but re-presents it as a manageable image, as something that is bearable & can be understood"
- Important for **self-regulation**

Psychopathology

- Deficit model of psychopathology
- Caregiver insensitivity
- *Trauma*: fear/abandonment impairs mentalisation
- Deficits in processing social-emotional information
- Deficits in self & identify regulation
- Self-object confusion
- Deficits in affect regulation

Borderline personality disorder DSM 5

- Frantic efforts to avoid real or imagined abandonment
- Unstable & conflicted interpersonal relationships characterised by alternating between extremes of idealisation & devaluation ('splitting')
- Identity disturbances (unstable self-image),
- Impulsivity
- Affective instability (including intense anxiety & anger)
- BPD as mentalising deficit

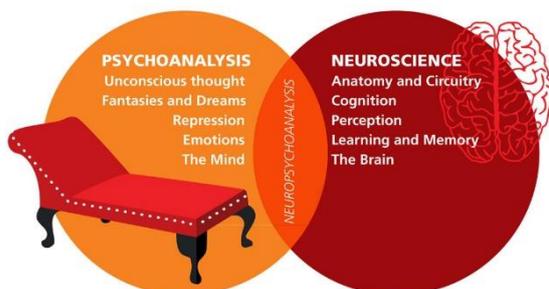
Mentalisation based therapy

- **Focus on the here and now**
- Therapist adopts a *mentalising stance*
 - The objective is for the patient to find out more about how he thinks & feels about himself & others, how this dictates his responses
 - how "errors" in his understanding of himself & others lead to actions that are attempts to retain stability & to make sense of incomprehensible feelings
- Successful BPD treatment (5 year follow up)

Neuropsychanalysis

1. Neuropsychanalysis

- Background: Freud trains in neurology
- *Project for a Scientific Psychology* (1895/1950)
- "We must recollect that our provisional ideas in psychology will presumably some day be based on an organic substructure" (Freud, 1914)
- Freud (1938/1940): pharmacological therapy for psychological disorders?



Neuropsychanalysis

- Neuroscientific study of Freudian theory
- Subjective data alone do not provide a solid foundation for a science of psychoanalysis
- Evolutionary roots of mind
- Emphasises emotional life & subjectivity
- Emphasises motivational drives
- Animal/human research
- Resurrecting Freudian theory
- Neuroscience of dreams
- Clinical neuroscience

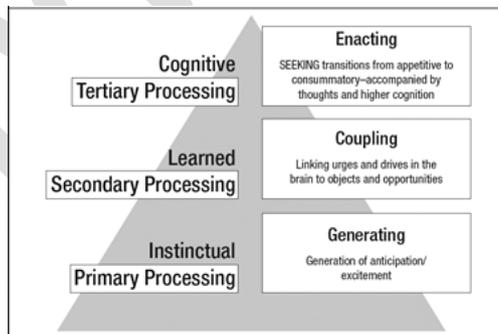
Affective neuroscience

- Homeostatic drives (hunger, sex)
- Primary emotional systems
- Panksepp (1998, 2015): 7 subcortical 'basic emotional command systems'
- Evidence: within/cross-species neural circuitry
- SEEKING (appetitive foraging): *mesolimbic-mesocortical dopamine pathway*
- LUST, FEAR (freezing & flight), RAGE, CARE, PANIC/GRIEF (separation distress), & PLAY

Seeking system

- Expecting/wanting system involved in:
 - i) goal-directed activities
 - ii) generating anticipation & excitement
 - iii) 'coupling' (linking drives to objects)
 - iv) 'enacting' via consummatory actions

Panksepp's SEEKING system	Freud's drive theory
Regulatory imbalances	Somatic source (<i>Quelle</i>)
Consummation	Aim (<i>Ziel</i>)
External stimulus	Object (<i>Objekt</i>)
Energetic activity	Motor factor (<i>Drang</i>)



2. Freud- interpretation of dreams

- "Royal road to the Unconscious" (Freud, 1900)
 - Dreams are expression of wishes
- Drives & motivational states (*desires*)
- Desires, waking fantasy & sleeping fantasy
 - Dreams are a representation of our desires
- Undisguised wish-fulfilment
- Regression to *primary process*

Freud's analysis: biological frustration & dreams

- Salty foods cause dehydration
- Dehydration causes a 'desire' (or wish) to drink during sleep
- Dream of drinking is an imaginary (hallucinatory) satisfaction
- *Minnesota Starvation Experiment* (1944-5): "Hunger made the men obsessed with food. They would dream & fantasize about food, read & talk about food ..."

- 'Guardians of sleep'
- Nightmares?
 - Anxiety dreams, nightmares → conflicting desires
 - *Psychical Conflict*: "... the dreamer fighting against his own wishes is to be compared with a summation of two separate, though in some way intimately connected, people..."
 - Repression & *ensorship*

SAMPLE