Social Psychology

Social psychology is

    (a) the scientific study of the human mind in the social context, characterised by the real or imagined presence of other people.

    (b) the scientific study of the effects of social and cognitive processes on the way individuals perceive, influence, and relate to others.

<div align="right">(Smith et al., 2015)</div>

Social processes are the ways in which input from the people and groups around us affect our thoughts, feelings, and actions.

Cognitive processes are the ways in which our memories, perceptions, thoughts, emotions, and motives influence our understanding of the world and guide our actions.

1. Emotion and motivation, as well as memory and thought, are intrinsic parts of every cognitive process.

2. Social and cognitive processes are interdependent. The social processes that affect us even when others are physically present depend on how we interpret those others and their actions, and therefore on the operation of cognitive process. Conversely, our group memberships influence us even when other group members are absent.

Interactionism in personality and social psychology: Thoughts, feelings, and actions are a product of the interaction between persons and situations.

History of Social Psychology as an Empirical Discipline

Norman Triplett (1898) is cited as the first research study in social psychology. Triplett examined if the presence of other people had a generally beneficial effect on performance. He asked school children to wind fishing line onto reels as quicky as possible, with and without others present. The children's performance improved in the presence of others.

The Self

The self is

(a) a person's **essential being** that **distinguishes them** from others, especially considered as the **object** of introspection or reflexive action.

(b) multidimensional, with four aspects: **material**, **spiritual**, **social**, and **pure ego**; and

(c) comprised of the "I" (subject) and "me" (object).

(William James, 1890)

Self-concept is the mental representation of all of a person's knowledge about his or her attributes.

1. **Big Two**: Communion (social relationships)
Agency (goal attainment)

2. **Big Five**: Agreeableness
Conscientiousness
Extraversion
Neuroticism
Openness to experience

Self-aspects are summaries of a person's beliefs about the self in specific domains, roles, or activities.

1. Personal aspects (*e.g.,* warm, extraverted) are features that distinguish a person from others.

2. Social aspects are roles (relational; *e.g.,* sister, friend) or group category memberships (collective; *e.g.,* Australian, male).

3. Domains (*e.g.,* at work, with friends) sometimes overlap with roles and groups.

Self-schema is a knowledge structure that links, organizes and weights self-concept components.

1. Self-schema provides a summary of core, important characteristics that a person believes defines him or her across situations.

Intergroup Processes

Social categorization is the process of perceiving people as members of social groups or categories rather than as unique individuals. This is an *automatic process* and forms the basis of social perception.

Self-categorization is the process of categorizing oneself as a group member. This is more likely to occur when one

(a) experiences direct reminders of group membership;

(b) is in the presence of outgroup members;
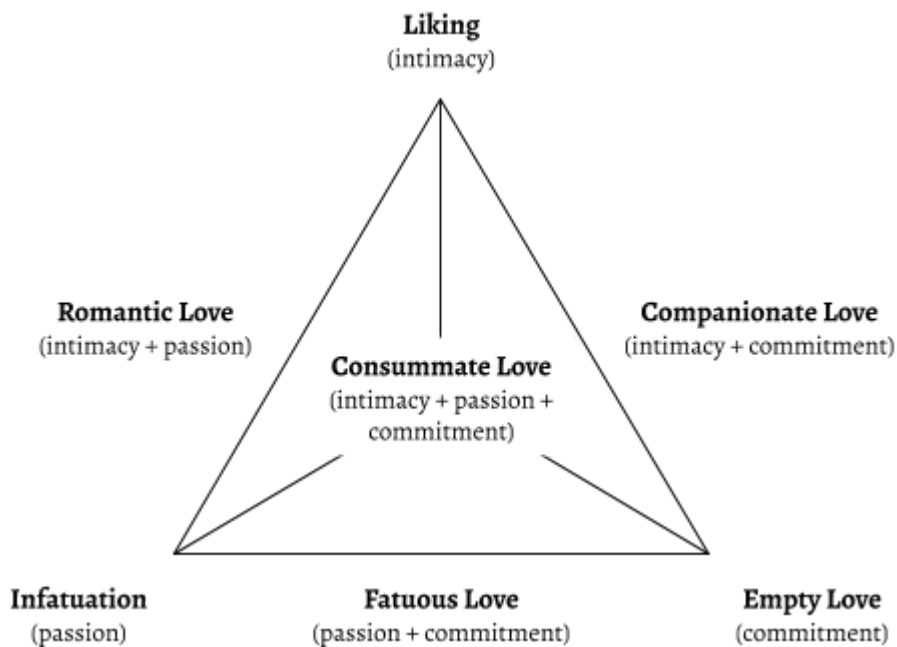
(c) is in a minority.
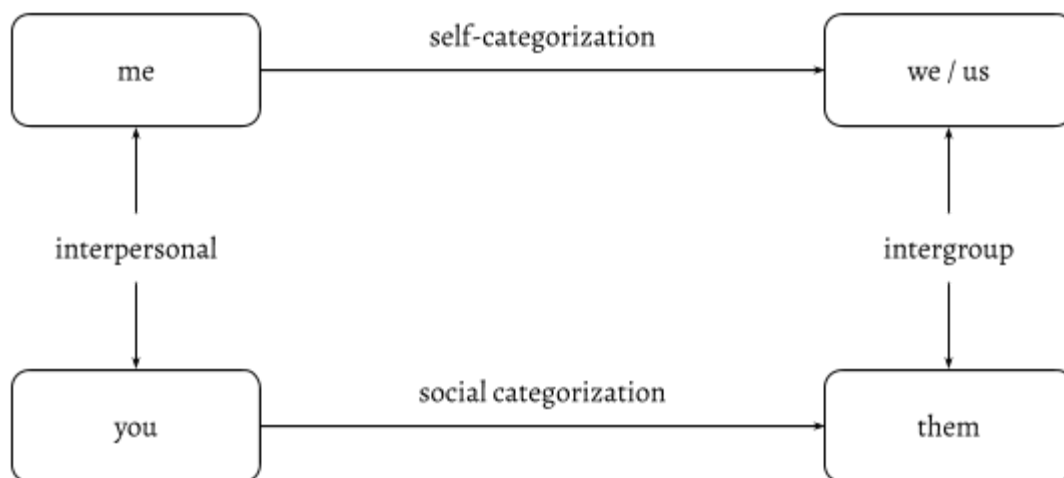
Category Differentiation Model

When in conditions for self and social categorizations, people tend to exaggerate intergroup differentiation and intragroup homogeneity, especially for outgroups.

(Doise, 1978)

Platz & Hosch (1988): Texas convenience store clerks of different races (*i.e.*, Anglo-American, African-American, Mexican American) were asked to identify a previous customer who was a confederate. They were provided with 5 pictures, one of which was of the customer and four of which were of distractors.

Liking
(intimacy)

Romantic Love
(intimacy + passion)

Companionate Love
(intimacy + commitment)

Consummate Love
(intimacy + passion +
commitment)

Infatuation
(passion)

Fatuous Love
(passion + commitment)

Empty Love
(commitment)

Intimacy: Feelings of closeness, connectedness, and interdependence.

Commitment: Long-term orientation to relationship.

Passion: Physical and sexual attraction or intensity of emotional connection.

(Sternberg, 1986)

Relationship Threat & Conflict

Threats can be external (*e.g.*, financial strain, gender roles, rivals) or internal (*e.g.*, illness, mismatch in expectations).

The presence of threats may lead to conflict.

Baxter's (1986) Relationship Rules

1. Autonomy
   Acknowledge each other's individual identities and lives beyond the relationship.

   Females cared more about this than males.

2. Similarity Display
   Express similar attitudes, beliefs, values, and interests.

Personality Psychology
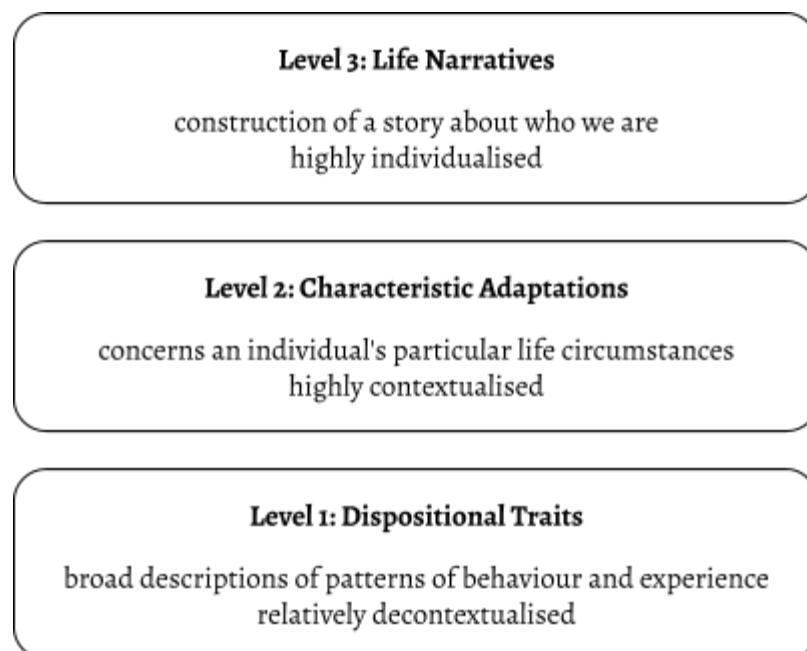
Personality is

(a) regularities in behaviour and experience.

<div align="right">(DeYoung & Gray, 2009)</div>

(b) an individual's unique variation on the general evolutionary design for human nature, expressed as a developing pattern of **dispositional traits**, **characteristic adaptations**, and **self-defining life narratives**, complexly and differentially situated in **culture and social context**.

<div align="right">(McAdams & Pals, 2006)</div>

Personality psychology aims to provide an integrative framework for understanding the whole person, and is uniquely positioned to focus its attention on human individuality through intensive case studies of individuals and study designs that keep the individual in mind.

Level 3: Life Narratives

construction of a story about who we are
highly individualised

Level 2: Characteristic Adaptations

concerns an individual's particular life circumstances
highly contextualised

Level 1: Dispositional Traits

broad descriptions of patterns of behaviour and experience
relatively decontextualised

<div align="right">(DeYoung, 2015; McAdams & Pals, 2006)</div>

Development & Change of Personality

Aspects of personality persist over time.

Mischel *et al.* (1972, 2011, *etc.*): 4-year-old children were given marshmellows and told that if they waited to eat them, they would be given more (**delay of gratification**). The children employed various self-regulation strategies. Longer wait times predicted

(a) higher SAT scores, better coping skills, and lower aggression in adolescence; and

(b) higher educational achievements, lower drug use, and better health in adulthood.

McAdams & Olson (2010):

(a) Temper tantrum frequency in early childhood predicts occupational instability.

(b) Inhibited 3-year-olds tend to have low positive emotionality, social potency, and well-being at the age of 26.

(c) Aggressiveness in third graders predicts adult criminality.