

TOPICS

1. Introduction to Social Psychology
2. Personality (Big Five)
3. Quantitative Methods
4. The Self & Others
5. Intra-groups & Inter-groups
6. Attitudes & Behaviour
7. Relationships
8. Helping/Harming
9. Moral Psychology & Evolutionary Social Psychology
10. Personality Development & Changes
11. Persons, Situations & Reasoning

1 INTRODUCTION TO SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY

Lecture 1 – Introduction to Social Psychology

Definition	Similarities	Differences
<p><u>Social Psychology</u>: understanding how social situations influence thoughts, feelings and behaviour</p> <p><u>Personality Psychology</u>: understanding how people differ in their thoughts, feelings and behaviours</p>	<p>→ Both concerned with explaining human thought, feeling and action</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Similar questions • Grounded in empirical research • Collect data and analyse with quantitative statistical techniques <p>Broad disciplines with fuzzy boundaries: the blend into other areas and into each other (cognitive, biological, developmental)</p> <p>Almost all personality and social psychologists consider thought, feeling and action to be a product of the interaction between the persons and situations (interactionism)</p> <p>→ not just the social context or individual differences</p>	<p><u>Social Psychology</u>: focused on the situation as the locus of the explanation</p> <p><i>Eg. How does the social context influence thought, feeling and action?</i></p> <p>Approach: situational contingency</p> <p><i>Eg. Are certain situational factors likely to lead people to conflict?</i></p> <p><u>Personality Psychology</u>: focused on the person as the locus of the explanation</p> <p><i>Eg. How do stable individual differences influence thought, feeling and action?</i></p> <p>Approach: cross-situational contingency</p> <p><i>Eg. Are certain people more prone to conflict than others?</i></p>

Social Psychology

Key Definition: the scientific study of the effects of social and cognitive processes on the way people perceive, influence and relate to others. This definition has several components:

1. **“Scientific Study”** - we observe something about our world → we make predictions and hypotheses about this → test them by collecting data (scientific or observations) → look to see if there is a difference between the prediction and data
2. **Social + Cognitive** – this definition encompasses parts of cognitive psychology and demonstrates the blending of the disciplines
3. **Perceive, Influence & Relate**
 - a. How do people relate to their social world?
 - b. How do we communicate that?
 - c. What is the effect of this communication on the external world?
4. **Others**
 - a. Relation to others (1 individual or a group)
 - b. Evaluation of non-human objects

Relation to Other Disciplines

Social psychology has lots of connections to other fields – inside and outside of psychology (chemistry, biology, humanities, medicine, economics etc.)

Common Relations:

1. **Unit of Analysis:** individual, dyad & group
 - a. Social psychology is focused on individuals and small groups whereas sociology looks more on the societal level
2. **General Methods:** scientific (observe → hypothesise → test → infer → revise → repeat)
 - a. Social psychology’s methods are more experimental as opposed to anthropology which is not experimental – they do cross over at times however
3. **Analyses: Quantitative**
 - a. Anthropology is qualitative
4. **Theories:** couched in terms of causal, mechanistic, cognitive and social processes
 - a. Philosophy is more normative and talks about what **should** be the case whereas social psychology is more descriptive and talks about what **is** the case
5. **Content & Process**

History of Social Psychology

Social psychological thought streams have a long history – but as an empirical discipline, it only emerged in the late 19th century (eg. Plato and Le Bon & Canetti – “crowd mind”)

Sociology as a Science

- William Wundt – **introspectionism**: getting people to reflect on their states of mind and engage in their inner thought process to explain their behaviours
 - Late social psychologists believed it to be subjective and unreliable
 - They were more interested in the stimulus which lead to **behaviourism**
- **Behaviourism**: Watson, Skinner and stimulus-response
 - This theory was rejected because stimulus is not given but interpreted
 - Pavlov’s Dogs
 - Interested in stimulus and behaviour patterns, stripped away the mental state talk as it was “unknowable”
- Cognitive Revolution: **mind as a computer**

- Believed behaviourism was too simplistic
 - Interested in the mind's processes as a computer and its ability to mimic human thought
 - Still very influential in psychology currently
- Biological Revolution – evolutionary psychology, neuro/physiological
 - The influence of **evolution and genetics**
- Big data and **computational psychology**
 - Writes a program that can get data from the internet and social platforms (eg. All tweets containing a specific hashtag)
 - This is instead of lab studies and is better for vast quantities of data analysis

Social Psychology Timeline

