INTRO TO SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY, COGNITION AND INFLUENCE

Social psychology: Study of the way in which people's thoughts, feelings, & behaviours are influenced by the real or imagined presence of other people.

Social influence: Effect that the words, actions, or mere presence of people have on our thoughts, feelings, attitudes or behaviour

- Socialists study the group or institution
- Social psychologists study the influence of those groups and institutions on individual behaviour
- Heart of Social Psychology
- Effect of words/actions/presence of others on one's thoughts/feelings/attitudes/behaviours

  Different Social Settings = Different Social Expectations = Different Social Norms

- Personality psychology tends to ignore social influences ∴ normally combined w social psychology

Sociology (Group level)	Social psychology (Individual level + group level)	Personality psychology (Individual level)
The study of groups, organisations and societies rather than individuals	The study of the psychological processes people have in common that make them susceptible to social influence	The study of the characteristics that make individuals unique and different from one another

Fundamental Attribution Error (FAE):

- Tendency to overestimate the extent of which people's behaviour is influenced due to internal factors and underestimate the role of external factors (situational factors)
- Tendency to assign (usually positive) behaviours of ourselves to the environment & (usually negative) behaviours of others to their individual personalities
- Bc we don't know/experience the other person's life ∴ tend to settle for simplistic explanation
  - Typical of humans

Ultimate Attribution Error (UAE):

- Tendency to assign negative behaviour to out-group & positive behaviour to in-group
- Tendency to assign negative behaviour of out-group to personality/individual & negative behaviour of in-group to environment

Underestimating power of social influence = gain false sense of security

- Increases personal vulnerability to possibly destructive social influence
- Lowers one's guard

Failing to appreciate power of situation = oversimplifying complex situations

= decrease understanding of true causes

= blame victim when people are overpowered by social forces

How we think about the social world

The social cognition perspective views people as "amateur sleuths" doing their best to understand and predict their social world.

Social Cognition: how people think about themselves & about the social world; more specifically, how people select, interpret, remember and use social info to make judgements and decisions.

- Way one thinks about the world/people around us
- Understanding the world around us
  - To make effective judgements & decisions

2 Types:

Automatic thinking	– quick & automatic/unconscious/involuntary – use schemas – Structures to organise knowledge about the world – dancing, sitting, writing
Controlled Thinking	– effortful & deliberate/conscious/voluntary Controlled Thinking — counterfactual reasoning – Mentally undoing the past Controlled Thinking — what someone is saying, what words mean

Types of Automatic Thinking:

Automatic Goal Pursuit	Priming w religious words ("more generous")
Automatic Decision Making	Choosing best apartment etc
Automatic Thinking & Metaphors about the Body & Mind	Smelling nice = more trusting stranger etc
Mental Strategies & Shortcuts	Judgemental heuristics (shortcuts to make quick decisions) Base rate info (general info) usually not used

Base Rate Fallacy — fallacy where when presented w base rate info & specific info, the mind tends to ignore

— rate info & focus on specific info

Configural Model - Solomon Asch (1946)

Central traits is an attribute in someone's personality that is considered particularly meaningful, in that its presence or absence signals the presence or absence of other traits.

- person has a warm personality, it usually means that he or she is also friendly, courteous—among many other possible traits

peripheral trait is one whose presence or absence does not imply many other characteristics.

- person is sarcastic, it might imply that he or she is cynical about the world or has a dark sense of humor—but not much else

Impression = primacy effect

Stereotypes: Characteristics attributed to members of a certain social group/category

- Simplify social information ∴ can sort out, process & remember info about others more easily
- attributing stereotypic cause for an outcome blinds us to the true causes of events

Information contradicting one's schema/stereotype is discounted as there's motivation to be correct/to avoid cognitive dissonance (hard to change once already formed – we see what we expect to see)

Schema: mental structures people use to organise their knowledge about the social world around themes or subjects & that influence the info people notice, think about & remember

- Cognitive structure
- Represents knowledge about a concept/type of stimulus ∴ allows to quickly make sense of a person/situation
- Used to organise what we know and interpret new situations
- Top-down processing

5 Types:

Person Schema	– about individual expectations based on personality/what is associated w type of person
Self-Schema	– about self – expectations of idealised/possible self ~ organise & guide processing of self-relevant info
Script/Event Schema	– scripts – about occurrences in social events – expectations about sequence of events in social situations
Role Schema	– about proper behaviours in given situations Role Schema – expectations about people in particular roles & social categories
Content Free Schema	

Accessibility: extent to which schemas & concepts are at the forefront of people's minds and are thus likely to be used when making judgements about the social world.

Schemas are accessible due to:

- past experience
- Relation to a current goal
- (temporarily) recent experience – primes

Priming – the process by which recent experiences increase the accessibility of a schema, trait or concept (a good example of automatic thinking)

- Thoughts have to be accessible AND applicable before they can be 'primes'
- Quick, involuntary & unconsciously

Self-Fulfilling Prophecy: case wherein people have an expectation about what another person is like, which influences how they act toward the person, which causes that person to behave consistently with people's original expectations, making the expectations true.

- One has expectations of what the other is like
- Influences how one acts towards the others ∴ causes the other to behave consistently w one's original expectations ∴ expectations become true

Cognitive Shortcuts (Heuristics):

Representative Heuristic	– Cognitive bias where one categorises a situation based on a pattern of previous experiences/beliefs o Useful for quick decision making BUT limiting bc leads to close-mindedness –
Availability Heuristic	– Mental strategy where one judges probability, frequency or extremity based on amount of known info o Adopt to simplify complex judgements BUT can produce biased & erroneous judgment
Anchoring	– Tendency to rely heavily on one trait/piece of info when making decisions
Affect Heuristic	– When decisions based on heuristics are coloured by mood/feelings