Social Psychology

(12-2 thru 12-6; 12-14, 12-15)

• Study of how our thoughts, feelings, perceptions, and behavior are influenced by the presence of or interactions with others.
• Relatively recent addition to psychology
• Research influenced by current social problems

Areas of Social Psychology

• Social thinking/social cognition (how we think about others & how others influence our thoughts)
  • Person perception
  • Interpersonal attraction
  • Attitudes & how they're influenced
  • Stereotypes/Prejudice
  • Propaganda
• Social influence (how our behavior is influenced by others)
• Social relationships
• Others or social situations have powerful effects on us!

Areas of Social Psychology

• Social thinking/social cognition (how we think about others & how others influence our thoughts)
  • Person perception
  • Interpersonal attraction
  • Attitudes & how they’re influenced
  • Stereotypes/Prejudice
  • Propaganda
• Social influence (how our behavior is influenced by others)
• Social relationships
• Others or social situations have powerful effects on us!

Social Influence: Conformity

In some ways we are built to conform [remember observational learning, mirror neurons]:

• Automatic Mimicry
  • Behavior is contagious; what we see we often do.

One Social Thinking Effect:

• Fundamental attribution error
  • The tendency, when analyzing others’ behaviors, to:
    • Overestimate the influence of personal traits AND
    • Underestimate the effects of the situation
  • When analyzing our own behaviors we are more likely to take the situation into account

  • Example: see someone trip – think they are a klutz
  • But if you trip, blame it on the uneven sidewalk

Others Focus on Social Influences on Our Behavior

• How our behavior is influenced, directly or indirectly, by the presence and/or the behavior of others, the social situation
  • Behavior of groups
  • Conformity; Obedience
  • Social roles, norms & impact of situation
  • Behavior in crowds; Aggression

  • Recommended leisure reading:
    by Robert Cialdini

Social psych research on influence has provided critical data for all sorts of careers that involve influencing others:

• Marketing & Sales
• Politics
• Fund-raising
• Litigation
• Management

Recommended leisure reading:

by Robert Cialdini

• Marketing & Sales
• Politics
• Fund-raising
• Litigation
• Management

http://www.learner.org/discoveringpsychology/19/e19expand.html?pop=yes&pid=1516#

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AiWZxOdXiUs
go to 1:27

Recommended leisure reading:

by Robert Cialdini

• Marketing & Sales
• Politics
• Fund-raising
• Litigation
• Management

http://www.learner.org/discoveringpsychology/19/e19expand.html?pop=yes&pid=1516#

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AiWZxOdXiUs
go to 1:27

Recommended leisure reading:

by Robert Cialdini

• Marketing & Sales
• Politics
• Fund-raising
• Litigation
• Management
Conformity

• When you yield to real or imagined group or social pressure, even if there are not direct requests.
• Solomon Asch - studied conformity by individuals placed with a group of strangers & asked to do a simple line perception task.

ASCH’S CONFORMITY EXPERIMENTS

ASCH’S STUDY

Would you go along with other’s responses?
A replication: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TYbHMSx5JYA

ASCH’S STUDY

70-75% conformed to the incorrect response some of the time

Factors Driving Conformity

Normative Social Influence
Conforming to group out of a need for approval & acceptance

Informational Social Influence
Conforming because of a need for information and direction

Conformity Research Findings

• People are more likely to conform when they:
  • Are made to feel incompetent or insecure
  • Are in a group in which everyone else agrees
  • Admire the group's status and attractiveness
  • Have not already committed to any response
  • Know that others in the group will observe our behavior
  • Are from a culture that strongly encourages respect for social standards

• Classic example:
  • https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BqReITWk8HU
Effects Of Others on Performance

In some situations:
- SOCIAL FACILITATION
  - improved performance in the presence of others
- true for simple or well-learned tasks

Home Town Advantage: Social Facilitation (partly)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sport</th>
<th>Games Studied</th>
<th>Home Winning Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Baseball</td>
<td>23,034</td>
<td>53.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Football</td>
<td>5,954</td>
<td>57.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ice hockey</td>
<td>4,332</td>
<td>61.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basketball</td>
<td>13,596</td>
<td>64.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soccer</td>
<td>37,302</td>
<td>69.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Effect of Others on Performance

SOCIAL LOAFING
people in a group exert less effort than when individually accountable
- Examples:
  - Group projects

Obedience

- Stanley Milgram - studied whether average individuals would obey an authority figure telling them to do something that harms another individual.
- Before the study psychiatrists predicted complete obedience in only .1% of participants (the ‘sadists’).
- What did Milgram find in his community volunteers? ........................................................
Extensions to Milgram’s Study

- Participants going all the way to 450:
  - 65% in original study
  - Similar results when conducted with women, unpaid college students
  - 48% when conducted away from Yale campus
  - 40% when sitting near the learner (victim)
  - 30% when teacher had to place learner’s hand on the electric grid for a shock
  - 21% when experimenter telephoned commands


Social Roles & Norms

- Whenever you are with others, there is a tendency for the group & situation to generate social norms & social roles.
- Social norms: standards for behavior in that situation
- Social role: particular positions in a social situation have different norms for appropriate behavior

Example: Stanford Prison Study

- Zimbardo and colleagues (1971)
- Randomly chosen “prisoners” and “guards”
- All “normal” college students
- Instructed not to use violence

For pictures, videos, and a detailed slide show see:

http://www.prisonexp.org
The Case of Kitty Genovese

1964

• Queens, New York.
• A total of 38 neighbors watched
• Stabbed to death over 35 min period
• The first phone call = 3:50 a.m. after Kitty was already dead.

Effect of Others on Helping Behaviors

• Researchers John Darley & Bibb Latane decided to study how the social situation influences the responses of bystanders in emergencies.

Smoke-Filled Room Study

Volunteers were asked to fill out questionnaires. While doing so, the room began to fill up with smoke.
• Tested participants in 1 of 3 conditions:
  • 1) 1 participant alone in room
  • 2) 3 naïve participants together
  • 3) 1 participant with 2 unconcerned “volunteers”
• Would they report the smoke and how fast?

Darley and Latané (1968) - the “seizure” study

Percent of SS Reporting Smoke

- Were also slower with more people present

Bystander Intervention

- As the number of bystanders increased, the percentage of individuals who helped decreased
Theories About Why We See the Bystander Effect

• Informational influence theory – we use the reactions of others to judge the seriousness of a situation.

• Diffusion of responsibility theory – you feel less personally responsible when others are observing the same emergency

• You have just taken a drug that will make you invisible for 48 hrs. What will you do during that time?

• Deindividuation - when you don’t stand out as an individual – happens in situations where you are relatively anonymous
  • In a disguise or even a uniform
  • Online
  • One person in a crowd

Effect of deindividuation

• Less likely to help.
• More likely to misbehave.
• More likely to express things you would usually keep to yourself.

Summary

• Situations are more powerful than we expect
• When ‘judging’ the behavior of others, remember that they are subject to the power of the situation
• Obedience is easy
• Nonconformity is hard
• Helping is unlikely if people are not sure if its an emergency or do not take responsibility
• Deindividuation disinhibits behavior

• Finally ----→