Social Psychology
Social Psychology Outline

Introduction

Group Structure/Cohesiveness
Social Thinking
Social Influence
Prosocial Behavior
Antisocial Behavior
Introduction to Social Psychology

- We either directly or indirectly interact with people every day
- According to psychologist Gordon Allport, social psychology is a discipline that uses scientific methods "to understand and explain how the thoughts, feelings and behavior of individuals are influenced by the actual, imagined or implied presence of other human beings" (1985)
• Actually, human society one of the strongest environmental influences on our mental processes and behavior
• Our psychology is profoundly shaped by people around us -- both near and far
• Understanding social psychology will help you understand why these people are behaving like this!
Some concepts in social psychology overlap with sociology

- The individual important in both

- However, while sociology looks at individual’s role in groups, social psychology focuses on influence groups have on individual’s behavior and mental processes
Introduction to Social Psychology (cont.)

The significant impact society has on our personal psychology is the reason this course is in the SOCIAL Studies department, not the Science department.

Ex. Remember back to freshman World History. What is the one word that could explain most of human history in the past 300 years, including today?

- Nationalism
- What is nationalism? How did it shape history? How does it shape our world today?
- Based on your understanding of psychology to date, why?
- A deeper understanding of Social Psychology should help you out with that question – I’ll ask it again at the end of the unit.
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Group Structure/ Cohesiveness

Do you consider yourself a member of a group?
A number of groups?
Write down all of the groups that you consider yourself a member of. Then, write down your role in each.

My examples:

1. My immediate family................................. Male head of household
2. My extended family................................. Eldest son/brother
3. Amity teachers...................................... “Young” veteran
4. Social Studies teachers............................ “Young” veteran
5. UConn alumni...................................... Peripheral member
6. Amity alumni...................................... Active member
**Group Structure/Cohesiveness (cont.)**

*Group structure* consists of an elaborate system of social roles, communication pathways and power distribution

**Social roles**

We all are members of multiple groups, and we have different roles in each

Two types of social roles

*Ascribed roles*: assigned, not chosen

Examples?

- Son/daughter, first born, male/female

*Achieved roles*: attained through some sort of effort

Examples?

- Ex. boyfriend/girlfriend, boss
Each role in a group brings with it a set of expected behaviors

Driven by the group’s expectations of us and how we want to meet those expectations

Examples?

• Athletic team captain -> expected to display leadership

*Role conflicts* happen when the expectations from two roles, um, conflict

Examples?

• Worker vs. Parent

Describe some role conflicts that you think new immigrants experience. How does that effect them?
In actuality, our perceived social role has a HUGE influence on human behavior.

- A great example of this is the “Stanford Prison Experiment”

Philip Zimbardo on the Daily Show in 2007

Group structure review

Groups are structured through an elaborate system of roles, communication pathways, and power. Now think about your social role in any of the groups you are a part of. How does that help shape your behavior when acting in that group?

- Use the terms social roles, ascribed roles, achieved roles, and role conflicts in your comments
Group Cohesiveness

Not only does a group have structure, it has a level of cohesion. What is the definition of *group cohesiveness*?

- The degree of attraction among group members (how well they stick together)
- Also reflected in the relative desire to stay in a group

Cohesive groups tend to work together better

What groups do you belong to that you feel are cohesive?

- Ex. My siblings
- Why are they cohesive? What keeps them together?
What causes group cohesiveness?

• Members strongly identifying with the group
  • Humans are social animals. We like being part of a group. It’s innate.
  • When one strongly identifies with a group, that group is called one of your *in-groups*

What groups do you belong to is an in-group for you -- one that you strongly identify with?

Vs. an *out-group* – a group ones doesn’t feel a part of

• We tend to view out-groups negatively
• Sets stage for prejudice – we will study that later
Group Cohesiveness (cont.)

Membership in an in-group plays an important social role – it gives us *status*

- Level of social power and importance
  - This sense of power/importance can be perceived or real
- Our role in the group is one source of status
- So is just being a member
- Why?
  - Can help build our self-esteem
Norms also help bind a group

- Widely accepted (often unspoken) rules about how group members should act
- If you want to be part of a group you are expected to behave in a certain way
- Deviant behavior could mean being ostracized from the group
- VERY powerful determinant of behavior? How powerful?

Look at what people are wearing in here. Notice any similarities?
Group Structure/Cohesiveness Review

Groups have two dimensions – a structure and a level of cohesiveness. The aspects of these dimensions shape human behavior.

Apply the following terms in a paragraph about the Stanford Prison Experiment:

- Group structure
- Social roles
- Ascribed roles
- Achieved roles
- Role conflicts
- Group cohesiveness
- In-group
- Out-group
- Status
- Norms
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Yo, Allie

• IT WOULD BE AWESOME IF YOU CAME WITH ME TO PROM!!
Social Thinking: Attribution Theory

• How do we perceive the motives of others? The causes of our own behavior?
  • We make *attributions*
  • As we observe others, we make inferences about them
• These inferences may be right or wrong, but in any event they influence how WE act toward those people

Why is he doing this?
What would you do if you saw him?
What would cause you to take that course of action?
Your assumption of why he was doing it – you attribute his behavior to some cause and you act accordingly
Social Thinking: Attribution Theory

• How are the following terms associated with attribution theory related?

  • *External cause*…*internal cause*

    • They are two classifications of causes we attribute behavior to

    • We attribute the action to an external cause if it lies outside the person (situations and circumstances).

    • We attribute the action to an internal cause if it lies inside a person (personality, likes, etc).

• Give some examples of each
How are these terms associated with attribution theory related?

**Actor-observer bias**…**Fundamental attribution error**

As actors, we tend to think our action is driven by external factors instead of internal factors -- called “actor-observer bias”

- I cheated on a test. I did that not because I’m a dishonest person (internal), but because I need to maintain a B average in order to go to my first choice college (external).
Social Thinking: Attribution Theory

• On the other hand, when evaluating actions of others we tend to think they are driven by internal causes
  • “Others who cheat are dishonest”
  • Many times this is not the case.
• When we make this mistake, we are committing a “fundamental attribution error”
  • Some thought that girl was planking because she is an extrovert who likes to show off her skills in public (internal). However, maybe she did it to win a bet (external).
Social Thinking: Attribution Theory

• Break into small groups. Provide three examples of when you or someone you know has committed a fundamental attribution error in the recent past.
  • What was the outcome of each of these situations?
  • Could the outcome have been different or even better if the person did not make a fundamental attribution error?
  • Why do you think individuals make fundamental attribution errors?
Social Thinking: Attribution Theory

• When we make attributions about other people's behavior we take into account three things

1. The behavior of the actor (person of interest)
2. The object of the person’s action is directed toward
3. The setting

• The setting is huge. They set unstated expectations, called *situational demands*, that define what behavior is appropriate in various situations and social settings.
Social Thinking: Attribution Theory

Share with me something that you recently observed. As a class let's discuss what was happening using these terms.

- Attributions
- External cause
- Internal cause
- Actor-observer bias
- Fundamental attribution error
- Situational demands
What is an attitude?

- A mixture of belief and emotion that predisposes a person to respond to other people, objects, or institutions in a positive or negative way.
- Therefore, it is VERY influential in shaping your evaluation of an object.

Without starting a huge argument, what is your attitude toward this guy?
Attitudes have three components

- **Belief component**
  - Your belief about the object of the attitude

- **Emotional component**
  - Your feelings about the object of the attitude

- **Action component**
  - Your actions toward various people/objects/institutions based on your beliefs and emotions

How were these three components expressed in our discussion of President Obama?
Social Thinking: Attitudes

How do people acquire attitudes?

• Experience
  • Can be formed with one or more positive or negative experiences with the object
• Interaction with others who have that attitude
• Group membership
  • Pressure to conform to norms
• Child rearing
  • Caregivers can influence developing minds very easily
  • Critical thinking ability does not develop fully until we are older
• Media (TV, newspapers, magazines, internet, etc.)

How did your attitude toward President Obama develop?

About 80% have the same political party identification as their parents. Why?
Social Thinking: Attitudes

We **will not** act on our attitudes if…

- The immediate consequences of our actions may be more powerful than the attitude
- We are worried that others will evaluate our actions negatively if we acted on our attitudes
- It conflicts with an ingrained habit

The majority of Americans consider themselves green…

…then why do HOV lanes remain virtually empty during the morning commute and most cars only have one driver in them?
We will act on an attitude if we have conviction about it

- Evokes strong feelings
- Think about it often
- Discuss it often
- Knowledgeable about it
How are attitudes measured?

- Focus groups
  - Small group discussions moderated by researcher
  - *Open-ended questions* asked, answers analyzed
Social Thinking: Attitudes

- Surveys
  - Open-ended questions
  - *Social distance scales*
    - Determines attitudes toward social groups by determining willingness to admit members into subject’s social group
  - *Attitudinal scales*
    - Series of statements that express various possible views on an issue
    - Commonly used example = Likert Scale
      - 5 point scale -> Agree Strongly to Disagree Strongly
    - Responses averaged and/or indexed, resulting score is a measure of the attitude
    - Sample attitudinal survey – What attitude is this measuring?
Social Thinking: Attitudes

• Can attitudes change?
  • It's hard – most attitudes are very stable
  • What happens if we are presented evidence that goes against a current attitude?

• Cognitive dissonance
  • A drive toward homeostasis is not just a biological thing – we like it in our thinking too
    • We want what we currently perceive to match the understanding we have developed for the world
  • When confronted with evidence that goes against a current attitude, the ambivalence gives us discomfort -- this discomfort is cognitive dissonance
We make an effort to reduce cognitive dissonance by either…

1. Discounting the new evidence
2. Changing our attitude

I’ve been told that there is a bit of a rivalry between Amity and Cheshire.

What could happen if you actually talked to some of them and they came across as nice?

What is easier to do?

Why?
Social Thinking: Attitudes

• However its possible for attitudes to change under the correct circumstances

• **Reference groups**
  • One tends to adopt attitudes of groups they feel a part of
  • Attitudes can change if one starts identifying with a reference group that has a conflicting attitude
  • Going to college can lead to some attitude changes. Why?

• **Persuasion**
  • Effective communicator and a well-crafted message can change an attitude
Social Thinking: Attitudes

- Share with me something that you recently observed. As a class let's discuss what was happening using these terms.
  - Attribute
  - Belief component
  - Emotional component
  - Action component
  - Conviction
  - Open-ended questions
  - Social distance scale
  - Attitude scales
  - Reference groups
  - Persuasion
  - Cognitive dissonance
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Social Influence

• Interaction with others almost always influences our behavior somehow
• Five levels of social influence – milder to stronger

1. Mere presence
2. Conformity
3. Compliance
4. Obedience
5. Coercion
Social Influence: Mere Presence

**Social facilitation**

- The mere presence of someone will make us do a simple or well-rehearsed task better.
- On the flipside, it will make a complex or unfamiliar task even more difficult.
Social Influence: Mere Presence

Social loafing

- People tend to work less hard when part of a group than when solely responsible for their work.
- Expectation that someone else will pick up the slack – the “buck” does not stop with you.
Social Influence: Mere Presence

*Personal space* demonstration

- I need two volunteers that are comfortable with each other

Demonstrate the following:

- *Intimate distance*
- *Personal distance*
- *Social distance*
- *Public distance*

*Spatial norms* vary by culture
Social Influence: Mere Presence

• How do these terms relate to each other?
  • Social facilitation…social loafing
  • Intimate space…personal space…social space…public space
Social Influence: Conformity

Recent studies have shown that conformity probably has most impact on our daily behavior

- We conform when we bring our behavior into agreement with actions, norms, or values of others in the absence of any direct pressure

Groups enforce norms through *group sanctions*

- Group members rewarded with acceptance and approval for conformity; threatened with rejection or ridicule for nonconformity
- The importance group membership is to the person strongly affects degree of conformity and potential impact of group sanctions
- So does *unanimity*, or total agreement on norms by the rest of the group
- Group size also has some effect on conformity, but it’s weaker
Social Influence: Conformity
The *Asch Experiment* is a great demonstration of the power of group sanctions on conformity.

Someone explain it to the class:

- In it, people evaluated a situation the same way members of the group did, even though their perceptions told them otherwise.
Social Influence: Conformity

What is *groupthink*?

- A compulsion by members of a group to maintain agreement, even at the cost of critical thinking.
- “A Brief History of Groupthink” handout.
Social Influence: Conformity

How can leaders prevent groupthink?

• Encourage members to raise objections/concerns;
• Refrain from stating preferences at onset of discussions;
• Allow group to be independently evaluated by separate group with different leader;
• Split group into sub-groups, each with different chairpersons, to separately generate alternatives, then bring sub-groups together to hammer out differences;
• Allow group members to get feedback on group’s decisions from their own constituents;
• Seek input from experts outside group;
• Assign member(s) to play the role of devil's advocate;
• Require group to develop multiple scenarios of events upon which they are acting, and contingencies for each scenario; and
• Call a meeting after a decision consensus is reached in which all group members are expected to critically review decision before final approval is given

(adapted from http://oregonstate.edu/instruct/theory/grpthink.html)
Social Influence: Conformity

• Discuss the human inclination to conform. Use the following terms in your answer.
  • Group sanctions
  • Unanimity
  • Groupthink
Compliance is the first of the social influencers that are direct—that is, we yield to a direct request from someone. When we comply, we agree to a request from someone that has little or no power over us.

Tupperware Party (circa 1950s)
Social Influence: Compliance

All the following are ways people can make you comply -- to do something you did not want to do in the first place

*Foot-in-the-door effect*
- Agreeing to small request can lead to agreeing to larger request

*Door-in-the-face effect*
- Agreeing to a smaller request after refusing larger request

*Lowball technique*
- Committing to a course of action then having terms of acting become less desirable
  - You don’t want to back out after you are committed

Have you ever had any of this done to you before? Have you ever done it to someone?
- I have (sheepish grin)
There are times when it makes sense to comply to a request

- Safety issue
- Any reasonable request
- Examples?

Many of us, however, are often guilty of *passive compliance*

- We comply to unreasonable requests or situations. Why?
  - Because we want to avoid a confrontation

Say some people are sitting behind you in a movie theater, talking loudly

How many of you would *truly* turn around and ask them to be quiet?
You feel you are passively compliant too often. What can you do?

• Learn how to be **assertive** without being aggressive

• Self-assertion is direct, honest expression of feelings and desires

• Aggression involves achieving one’s goals at the expense of feelings or rights of others

“Assertiveness and self-confidence” reading
Social Influence: Compliance

• Discuss how people get others to comply with requests or situations. Use the following terms in your answer.
  • Foot-in-the-door effect
  • Door-in-the-face effect
  • Lowball technique
  • Passive compliance
Social Influence: Obedience

Obedience is the next strongest form of social influence.

When we obey we agree to a request from someone that has power over us.
Social Influence: Obedience

There are five types of power:

- **Reward power** – lies in the ability to reward a person for performing with a desired behavior
- **Coercive power** – based on ability to punish a person for failure to obey
- **Legitimate power** – comes from an accepting a person as an agent for an established social order
- **Referent power** – based on respect for/identification with person/group
- **Expert power** – based on the recognition that another person has knowledge necessary for achieving a goal

People who have power in one situation don’t necessarily have it in other situations

Someone with the power is said to be an **authority**
Social Influence: Obedience

• Why do you obey me? (for the most part 😊). Use some/all of the following terms in your answer.
  • Reward power
  • Coercive power
  • Legitimate power
  • Referent power
  • Expert power

• Why did the subject in the Milgram Experiment obey the “researcher” sadistic commands?
Social Influence: Coercion

The most extreme form of social influence is coercion

When you are coerced, not only do you change your behavior, but your beliefs and/or attitudes are changed as well

- You have to be part of a captive audience in order to be brainwashed
- Nowhere else to go

Many who have been brainwashed join cults
After watching the video about the Jonestown mass suicide in 1978, consider the following:

• Who is susceptible to coercion like this?
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Prosocial Behavior

Prosocial behavior

• Behavior that has a positive impact on other people

Why do people affiliate?

• We have a need to affiliate – a desire to associate with other people
  • Do it for basic human desires for approval, support, friendship, and information

How do these terms relate to each other?

• Social comparison theory…Downward comparison…upward comparison
Prosocial Behavior

*Interpersonal attraction*

- A social attraction to other people
- Different factors
  - Physical proximity
  - Physical attractiveness
  - Competence
  - Similarity
Do humans have a tendency to help others?

- Kind of…
- We will help people if we feel *empathic arousal* — emotional arousal that occurs when you feel some of another person’s pain, fear, or anguish
- However, sometimes we often don’t help others when we should
  - Due to *bystander apathy* (aka *bystander effect*)
    - Unwillingness of bystanders to offer help during emergencies or to become involved in others’ problems
    - Driven by *diffusion of responsibility* — spreading the responsibility of act among several people; reduces the likelihood that help will be given to a person in need
- Observe incidence of bullying in the hallway
- Kitty Genovese reading
Prosocial Behavior

Evolution, Emotion, and Reason: Love (Guest Lecture by Professor Peter Salovey, at the time Dean of Yale College, delivered 2/14/07)

- Named the 23th President of Yale in November 2012 – took office June 30, 2013


- Has a great discussion of why we are attracted to each other

- Also does a good job reviewing/diving deeper into Robert Stanberg’s “Triangular Theory of Love”
Prosocial Behavior

Robert Stanberg’s “Triangular Theory of Love….”

Let’s fill it in!

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Intimacy} & \\
\text{Passion + Intimacy} & \quad \text{Intimacy + Commitment} \\
\text{Intimacy + Passion + Commitment} & \\
\text{Passion} & \quad \text{Passion + Commitment} & \quad \text{Commitment}
\end{align*}
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Antisocial Behavior
Social life is complex, but consistent patterns can be found in our positive and negative interactions with each other.

Broadly speaking, any behavior that has a negative impact on other people is called antisocial behavior.
Antisocial Behavior: Aggression

How do psychologists explain human aggression?

• Before we answer that, how do psychologist define *aggression*?
  • Any action carried out with the intention of harming someone

• And how do each of the following relate to human aggression?
  • *Instinct*
  • *Biology*
  • *Frustration-aggression hypothesis*
  • *Social learning theory*
Antisocial Behavior: Aggression

Media as a *disinhibiting* factor with respect to aggression
Media as a *desensitizing* factor with respect to aggression
Antisocial Behavior: Prejudice & Stereotypes

What does *prejudice* mean?

• A negative emotional attitude held against members of a particular group of people

Take out a piece of paper and make two columns

In the left column list some “good” prejudices that you hold; in the right column list some “bad” prejudices that you hold

Can there really be “good” and “bad” prejudices?
Antisocial Behavior: Prejudice & Stereotypes

The Causes of Prejudice

- What is the difference between prejudice and *discrimination*?
- What is *implicit prejudice*?
- How does *scapegoating* relate to prejudice?
- What is the difference between *personal prejudices* and *group prejudices*?
- How does *ethnocentrism* help prejudice develop? *Dogmatism*?

Can all this explain 1) the attitudes expressed by Al Campanis on ABC’s *Nightline* in 1987 and 2) how he could have developed them?
Antisocial Behavior: Prejudice & Stereotypes

What can be done about prejudice and intergroup conflict?

• The following terms should be used at some point in our discussion
  
  • Social stereotypes
  • Symbolic prejudice
  • Equal status contact
  • Superordinate goals
  • Multiculturalism
  • Individuating information

Do the attitudes expressed in the following panel discussion indicate this will be relatively easy or relatively hard?
Social Psychology Unit Review

Group Structure/Cohesiveness

• Social roles, in-groups, out-groups, status, norms

Social Thinking

• Aka social cognition, attribution theory, fundamental attribution error, actor-observer bias, attitudes (formation and change), cognitive dissonance, attitude measurement

Social Influence

• Social power, mere presence, conformity (Asch experiment), compliance, obedience, coercion

Prosocial Behavior

• Affiliation, interpersonal attraction, liking and loving, bystander apathy vs. bystander intervention

Antisocial Behavior

• Aggression, prejudice and stereotypes, intergroup conflict