

Chapter 13 Psychology Notes

Social Psychology Part 1

Social Psychology

- How do you behave when you are with your grandparents? Is it different when you are with your friends?
- How do you behave when you are at work compared to when you are at a party?
- Have you ever listened to a political speech and felt angry or excited or ready to act, only to feel less passionate and reactive later?
- When you were a kid, were you ever mean to a kid you didn't necessarily dislike because everyone else was and you wanted to be part of the group.
- People (real or imagined) and social situations affect human behavior and thought. Social psychology studies the phenomenon of others influencing human behavior

Cultural Animal or Eusocial?

- Human beings are a social species. We are heavily reliant on other people for our survival and well-being. And the level of complexity of human social groups far outstrips that of other mammals.

Cultural Animal

- Social psychologist Roy Baumeister argues that we aren't merely social animals, but our behavior is shaped by culture as well.

Eusocial

- Human society has division of labor, cooperative care for young, and social hierarchy. According to E.O. Wilson, this makes humanity like super organism.

We Need People

- Social rejection causes pain in the same brain areas associated with physical pain.

Kip Williams

- A subject comes into a lab. They start playing catch with two other "subjects." Eventually, the other two start passing only to each other. The mood and the self-esteem of the third person drops dramatically.

Cyberball

- Williams now does this with an online game. It works when people know it's just a game. It works when people are tricked into thinking the other two "players" are part of a disliked out group like the KKK.

Why Does Ostracism Hurt

- If we need other people to survive and reproduce, ostracism can be dangerous in a small relatively isolated group like the ones early humans lived in. Early people lived in groups of around 150 people.

Alpha/Beta Hierarchy Doesn't Describe Human Social Structure

- This is a popular psychology myth I might as well dispel now. While humans do have social hierarchies, the dominant Alpha male structures fits humans relatively poorly.
 - Examples:
 - The Most Powerful People in the World
 - Crippled person in Egypt
 - Old Pope
 - Theodora/prostitute/Intelligent
 - "Alpha Males" Who Ended Up Dead or In Prison
 - Creaser- was stabbed to death
 - Napoleon- family chose to go against him and allied with the opposing war, wasn't very social

Social Status: Prestige Bests Dominance

- Status is complicated in human society and can be raised by having control over resources, having a valuable skill, the religious beliefs of a society, interpersonal skill, and strength/dominance (when strength is a valuable asset).

Social Comparison Theory

- "We evaluate our abilities and beliefs by comparing them with those of others." There are two types of social comparison: upward and downward.

Upward Social Comparison

- When we compare our abilities with those who are superior in some domain. (Comparing my math skills to Stephen Hawking).

Downward Social Comparison

- When we compare our abilities to people who are less skilled in a domain. (Comparing my math abilities to those of a two year old).

Above And Below Average Effect

- When a task seems easy we assume we are above average at it. When it seems hard, we assume we are below average at it.

Above and Below Average Effect

- When a task seems easy we assume we are above average at it. When it seems hard, we assume we are below average at it.

Above Average

- Driving. Most people think they are good at driving. So they take more risks than their skills warrant.

Below Average

- Imposter's syndrome is the tendency for highly accomplished people to believe they are frauds.

Mass Hysteria: When Using Others for Information Goes Wrong

- We look to others for information about our own abilities and social standing. We also look to others in order to figure out how to feel about our environment.

Mass Hysteria

- Mass hysteria is when a few people panic about something that isn't threatening and it causes a rash of panic and reports. (Orson Welles/Leonard Paez and Eduardo Alcaraz and War of the Worlds).

Conformity

- Another consequence of the power of social influences is that people are susceptible to conformity. People conform to varying degrees.

Conformity as a Topic of Study

- Many of the early pioneers in conformity research were Jewish American psychologists who were disturbed by what is still one of the most troubling questions of the 21st century.

Germany: 1932

- IN 1932 Germany was one of the most civilized and educated countries in the world. Germany invented the modern PhD degree and people from all over the world traveled to Germany to get German degrees.

Germany: After 1933

- Nazis took over Germany.

How Did Evil Take Over a Country?

- Why did an educated, technologically advanced country end up starting a massive world war and exterminating millions of its own people?

The Asch Study

- He had a participant sit in a group with fake participants. They were shown pictures of lines.
- Exhibit 1 was alike Exhibit A and there were people that were actors and they purposely chose wrong answers and there were people that choose the wrong answers because they conformed.
- The actors would give the wrong answer. This happened 12 times. About 75% of the respondents conformed to the wrong answer at least once. Across trials, participants conformed about 37% of the time.