




I. What is Social Psychology

A. Defining Social Psychology




1. Aronson's Def.: Social Psych = Soc. Influence – influence that people have on the beliefs and behavior of others
2. Class Def: = The scientific study of the way in which people's Affect, Behavior and Cognitions are influenced by the real, implied, or imagined presence of other people and how they influence others.
(adapted from Allport, 1968)

B. Social Psychology vs. Sociology & Personality Psychology

The Person by situation matrix: You can divide the world into people (rows: p1 p2 p3) and situations (columns).

ROWS (People)	Columns (Situations)		
	Class	Playground	Alien Space Craft
 P1 Kyle	-	-	-
 P2 Stan	-	-	-
 P3 Cartman	-	-	-






B. Soc. Psy v. Sociology & Personality Psyc

ROWS (People)	Columns (Situations)		
	Class	Playground	Alien Space Craft
 P1 Kyle	no hit	no hit	no hit
 P2 Stan	no hit	no hit	no hit
 P3 Cartman	hit	hit	hit

Personality Psyc : Interested in the ROWs,
 Interested in differences between individuals
 that are consistent across situations
 -e.g. Cartman hits things & people with a stick
 in the classroom, on the playground, and on
 board an alien space craft. (Aggressive
 Personality). Kyle & Stan do not.

B. Soc. Psy v. Sociology & Personality Psyc

Columns (Situations)






ROWS (People)		Class	Playground	Alien Space Craft
 P1 Kyle		no curse	curse	 curse
 P2 Stan		no curse	curse	curse
 P3 Cartman		no curse	curse	curse

Sociology: interested in factors that influence all of the columns and all of the individuals.

Cursing may be an issue of SES or Regional Culture.

B. Soc. Psy v. Sociology & Personality Psyc

Columns (Situations)

ROWS (People)		Class	Playground	Alien Space Craft
 P1 Kyle		dr	r	 r
 P2 Stan		dr	r	r
 P3 Cartman		dr	dr	r

Social Psychology: Is interested in the interactions between individuals and situations.

- Social Psychology would suggest that these differences in obedience to authority may be a result of the ambiguity of the situations and status of the authority presiding over these different situations.

C. Four Metaphors

1. People are Consistency Seekers
2. People are Naïve Scientists/Information Processors
3. People are Cognitive Misers
4. People are Motivated Tacticians

C. Four Guiding Metaphors Continued

1. People are Consistency Seekers
 - Field Theory
 - Balance Theory
 - Dissonance Theory
 - Expectancy Value Theory
 - Ambiguity Intolerance
 - Persuasion
 - Conformity/Compliance/Obedience
2. People are Naïve Scientists / Information Processors (Computers).
 - Attribution Theory
 - Cold Social Cognitive Theory

C. Four Metaphors Continued

3. People are Cognitive Misers

- Attribution Biases
- Heuristic Processes
- Prejudice & Discrimination

4. People are Motivated Tacticians

- Hot Social Cognitive Theory

D. 3 Core Motives

1. Need to Look Good to Others

- Belonging
- Trusting and Being Trusted

2. Need to Feel Good about Yourself

- self-enhancement

3. Need to Accurately Perceive the World

- understanding, prediction, and control

Though not mutually exclusive they often compete with one another.

D. Major Themes in Social Psyc

- 1) The Social Context -
 - The Behavior of others
 - e.g. Social Pressure, Pro/Anti-Social Behavior, Proximity
 - The characteristics of others
 - e.g. Attractiveness, Status, Sex/Gender, Group Membership, Age, novel vs. familiar.

C. Major Themes in Social Psyc cont

- 2) Cognitive Processes -
 - Information Processing Strategies / I P Resources
 - e.g., speed vs. accuracy
 - Attitudes / Beliefs / Representations of the world
 - e.g., expectancies about situations
 - Motivations
 - e.g., looking good vs. being accurate
 - Emotional/Arousal States
 - Individual Differences (Personality)
 - Enduring attitude/motivation patterns

C. Major Themes in Social Psyc cont

3) Environmental Variables

- Physical Environment - Temperature, Time of day, Available Space, Sociopetal vs. Sociofeugal space,

4) Cultural Context

- Historical Context
- Cross-Cultural Comparisons: e.g., Collectivist vs. Individualist Cultures

5) Biological Factors

- Neurological Influences
- Genetic/Hormonal/morphological determinants
- Evolutionary History - evolutionary psychology (socio-biology)