# **Social Psychology Chapter 1**

What is social psychology?:

Human behavior is specific social environments

How social environments change our way of behavior, way of thinking, values, preferences, beliefs

### **Social psychology**

* The scientific study of feelings thoughts behaviors of individuals in social situations
* Ex. the color red associated with hunger

### **Explaining behavior is the goal of psychology**

* **Abu Ghraib prison**

- military police and guard were very abusive to the prisoners-became extremely violent and bizarre-they would make them do sexual acts.

**- Staford prison experiment/Zimbardo prison study**

-simulation of a prison and the guards became brutal and prisoners rebelled -positions of power

The power of situations often determine behavior regardless of an individuals’ attributes

* Ex. Nazi Germany (were they all evil or following orders-slow progression)
* -US knew for two years and did nothing

Many the crimes against people were done by their peers,

### **The Milgram Experiment:**

* Experiment to test obedience to authority figures - a fake screen when pressing a button that “electrocuted someone” and they all pressed it when told to continue
* ⅔ 67% of volunteer administered a lethal amount to shock when convinced by an authority figure (a man in a white coat)
* The teacher vs the learner - teacher instructed to shock if the learning the wrong answer
* Went up to 415 volts 375-fatal
* They did not change their perception of if they were a good person when they left/could have killed someone
* What was the justification

- someone else will take responsibility (diffusion of responsibility)

- I'm helping science

- You should get punished if you get the wrong answer

- Milgram predicted that of the 100 40 year old maybe 1-3 would go all the way to the final

voltage

- Same effects from women and men- always get the same number

* When they did a dog they women went to 100%
* Was this experiment ethical?

### **The fundamental Attribution Error:**

We attribute others' bad behavior to their Dispositions(internal factors(beliefs, values, personality traits, and abilities)) without looking at the impacts of the situation and surrounding environment

Failure to recognize or underestimate the impact of situational influences on behavior

Tendency to overemphasize the impact of dispositions on behavior

We are more likely to attribute our negative behaviors to our situations

### **Gestalt psychology**

We do this kind of automatic processing, controlled processing is when you stop and think about things, but since there are so many different things that happen that we react to things quickly we automatically process them as a way to stay alert and use it as a survival technique. Sometimes if you take your time to think things through it can lead to a negative result

Principles and perception:

We often fill things in that might not actually exist

Often our beliefs, values ex... Come from automatic processing

Stereotypes often come from automatic processing

We need our beliefs to stay safe

I am an artist

I am a living, breathing human being

I am a student

I am introspective

I am someone who likes cold weather

I am daughter

I am self-aware

I am vegetarian

I am selfish

I am uncertain

-can see how people in western nations pick things that differentiate them and people from other places often like to say what makes them part of a group

In the west we are always looking at how we are isolated from others

### **Schema:**

Knowledge structure consists of any organized body of stored information - used to help understand events

These knowledge stores for generalized knowledge may be about the physical and social world; for example, what kind of behavior to expect when dealing with certain people or situations.

It can be challenging to alter your personal schema

Our schemas get formed early so it can take a lot of time to relearn

Schemas influence behavior and judgment- prior expectations influence controls(rules)

-how you understand the social rules/ how you expect people to act and how you act and behave

### **Stereotypes**

A belief that certain attributes are characteristic of members of a particular group

-schema on a smaller more specific scale

Stereotypes are automatic processing

They are often wrong but the Meiser effect (we as humans try to use as little energy as possible to make generalizations )

It takes 8 seconds to make a first impression of a person - wrong 85% of the time

They can make social intersections more efficient but ic can also cause a lot of harm if they are wrong

Confirmation bias - when your stereotypes are conferred and then that pushes them onto you further

They deny the individuality of people

Our brains use stereotypes to help us understand other things quickly

Changing stereotypes can feel dangerous

**Automatic processing vs controlled processing are the 2 different ways social information processed**

### **Automatic processing**

Involuntary and unconscious

Gives rise to implicit attitudes and beliefs that cannot be readily controlled by the conscious mind

People can rely on it because it’s easier

Can cause things like implicit racism

### **Controlled processing**

Is conscious, systematic and deliberate

It can override automatic responses

Controlled, conscious processing results in explicit attitudes and beliefs of which we are aware

Can be used to address our biases

Can be slow but it can be difficult to use in dangerous times or when you are in immediate danger