**LECTURE 1**

**Social psychology:**

“The scientific study of the reciprocal influence of the individual and his or her social environment.”

-- The Blackwell Encyclopedia of Social Psychology

Beliefs

Feelings Behaviour Other People

Attitudes (and their thoughts

Emotions feeling, attitudes and behavior)

Social psychology: A foothold in abstract theory and concrete practice

* Often we are interested in trying to identify what are some principles of human behavior, but much of the history of social psychology has real world application, trying to solve real human problems

Social psychology is not like chemistry or physics: We traffic in **probabilities**, **likelihood**, and **correlations**, rather than absolute laws.

* Human behavior is much more messier, there is no exact results
* Just because something has more chance of occurring, doesn’t mean it happens all the time
* If the likelihood of it occurring by chance is unlikely, then that is a phenomenon

Despite the enormous variability of human behaviour, it is possible to extract some basic patterns of human behaviour.

* Just because human behavior is messy, does not mean that there are not some basic rules that people follow most of the time

**What does social psychology have to say that my grandmother couldn’t tell me?**

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Intuitions must be tested against empirical data. Sometimes even our grandma’s intuitions are wrong! (i.e. not supported by data)

* Sometimes initially intuitions about human nature don’t stand up to scientific empirical test

Plus…sometimes two opposing clichés may seem equally intuitive:

You are working on a task (rolling cigars in a Cuban cigar factory) with 20 other people.

The owners expand the factory so that now 100 people are all rolling cigars side-by-side. Will this make a difference in your individual cigar output?

On the one hand, you might think…more people, more competition, more impetus to **perform better**.

On the other hand, you might think…more people, more anonymity, easier for me to “coast” (**perform worse**).

(On the third hand…it doesn’t make a difference.)

Each of these options seems plausible to people.

(For the “real” answer: stay tuned…coming later!)

* Very often we have opposing cloches, so we need to put both cloches to an empirical test to see which some stands up

# SOCIAL FACILITATION

What is the difference between working in the presence of others (an audience) vs. working alone?

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“The crowd brings out the best in me. The bigger the crowd, the better I play.”

vs.

“choking” under intense scrutiny of large audience (Rick Ankiel?)

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Triplett (1897): Tried his own experiment: Got 40 children to wind up fishing reels, sometimes alone, sometimes side-by-side with others.

Which group reeled faster (alone vs. with others)?

* Field of social psychology did not exist yet
* Operating at a time where the bicycle
* Found that biker achieved after time when competing with others than with alone
* Got children to reel up fishing rods as fast as they can, one group winding by themselves and another group winding with a group
* Found that the children in the group wheeled in more reel (i.e. faster) than those alone
* Other researchers tried this exact same method with various different tasks, and found it hard duplicating Triplett’s results, sometimes even getting opposing results

Zajonc: The presence of others increases **arousal** (which is something that is physiologically measurable, i.e. heart-rate, sweating palms, etc.).

* According to Zajoc the presence of other people increases arousal
* Arousal was empirically measurable (i.e. measuring heart rate)

Arousal energizes you and facilitates the dominant response (the behavior that comes most quickly and easily given a particular stimulus). Arousal activates the thoughts and motor responses that are the most practiced.

On a well-learned task (reciting the alphabet/your birthday), the dominant response is the correct response. On a poorly-learned task (naming state capitols/your mother-in-law’s birthday), the dominant response is likely to be incorrect.

* On a poorly learned task you would do worse in a group than alone
* On a well learned task you would do better in a group than alon

THEREFORE:

***an audience should improve your performance on tasks that are easy for you and hamper your performance on tasks that are more difficult.***

* ***Arousal increases the dominant response***
* ***Social facilitation does not mean you always do better in a group, you could do better or worse based on how well learned the task is***

THE “COCKROACH” EXPERIMENT

Zajonc argued that this basic model does not only apply to humans but to all species. He build two mazes for cockroaches to navigate, one easy one hard. Half of the cockroaches performed this maze alone, and the other preformed with an audience of cockroaches looking at them (through glass maze walls).

The cockroaches did better on the easy maze when there was an audience compared to when there was no audience, but did worse on the hard maze when there was an audience.

The results supported Zajonc’s theory.

It is important to note that the cockroach arousal system is super different than human arousal system, but the fact that he was able to replicate this with cockroaches suggests that he may have been tapping into something very fundamental about all organisms.

The easy maze The “hard” maze

**COMPARISON OF SOCIAL FACILITATION THEORIES:**

But like all great theories, this theory did not go unchallenged. Two rival psychologists (Cottrell and Baron) proposed two opposing theories.

EVALUATION APPREHENSION THEORY

Cottrell proposed that performance is enhanced or decreased only if the presence of an audience that is in a position to evaluate you. It is the fear of failure. He did not deny that arousal played a part, but it was not the mere presence of an audience, but the presence of an audience that can evaluate you. This is called the “Evaluation Apprehension” theory.

* He made an experiment with three conditions. You do the task alone, you do the task with people watching you, and you do the task with an audience was blindfolded
* He found that results supported Zajonc’s theory but a blindfolded audience reduced the effect.
* Which concluded that mere presence is not the whole story, it is also the audience’s ability to evaluation you

DISTRUCTION CONFLICT THEORY

Baron proposed that being distracted provides extra stimuli, which in turn increases arousal. There is nothing uniquely social about social facilitation. Having other people there is another stimuli, which takes your attention away from the task at hand.

* Baron did a bunch of experiment where he tested people and has stimuli such as a noisy printer, and found that it also decreased performance
* So the presence of people has the same effect as any other distraction

However, bother psychologists agreed that arousal played a role in performance.

**Zajonc Cottrell Baron**

**Is it social? Yes Yes No**

**Is mere presence Yes No No**

**(of another person) sufficient?**

Like most social psych work, different theories work better in different conditions. Current, ongoing work looks at isolating these conditions.

**SOCIAL LOAFING**

**Q: When does the presence of others cause us to relax, rather than get aroused?**

**A:** When efforts are **pooled/collective task** (assembly lines, juries, orchestras), and the performance of any one individual is difficult or impossible for observers to determine.

Ringelmann was interested in comparing the relative work efficiency in traditional farm methods (pulling things with ox) versus machines. He wanted to see whether using machines actually makes thing better. He had people pull as hard as they could on a rope (which was attached to a scale to measure the kilograms pulled). He had people either pull alone or in groups of 2, 3 or 8. One would expect a group of 8 people pulling a role to be 8 times what a group of one would.

Results:

# people pulling rope: 2 3 8

amount of force

equivalent to: 2 2.5 4

“The whole is less than the sum of the parts.”

There initial findings were shocking because they violated intuition as well as Zojonc’s theory.

How does social loafing occur?

Initially, two possible explanations:

1. COORDINATION LOSS: groups less coordinated (more interference – nothing to do with individual effort)
2. MOTIVATIONAL LOSS: people try less hard in groups

Latane: Told subject either that they were alone or that they were part of a team, but their teammates were all in separate rooms. (Why separate rooms? So that there’s no sound interference). The task was to go in a scream and yell as loud as possible, and if you were with teammates then your decibels were pooled together.

There actually were no teammates.

Their task: To **scream and yell** and make as much noise as possible! (Dependent variable: decibel level)

*[](http://drs.yahoo.com/S=96062857/K=scream/v=2/TID=DFIM_1/SID=w/l=II/R=10/*-http:/images.search.yahoo.com/search/images/view?back=http://images.search.yahoo.com/search/images?srch=1&p=scream&ei=UTF-8&n=20&fl=0&h=523&w=327&imgurl=www.branaghcompendium.com/scream.jpg&name=%3cb%3escream%3c/b%3e.jpg&p=scream&rurl=http://www.branaghcompendium.com/photos.htm&type=&no=10&tt=27,900)*

**Note: there never was any team, some were just told that they were part of a team**

**Results:**

Alone – 100%

(supposedly) 1 other person- 82%

(supposedly) 5 other people- 74%

This is pretty big effect, you lost a quarter of the decibel level is lost when you are in bigger groups. Here the coordination loss effect is taken out, so it must be motivational loss. You try less hard when you are in a group.

Social loafing is a very interesting social phenomenon, and also quite robust against cultures.

What reduces loafing? (Latane and colleagues over numerous experiments):

1. Identifiability (when each individuals contribution is identifiable)
2. importance of task (when it important for the group to do well)
3. own efforts necessary for successful outcome
4. threat of punishment for poor performance
5. small group
6. group cohesiveness (the degree to which members of the group are similar to each other, the degree to which the roles of members are different, for example a football team)

SOCIAL COMPENSATION

Karau & Williams-**collective effort model**:

Big tradeoff: Effort is fatiguing, but success is desired. People seek to optimize the **ratio** between their input and the groups’ output (i.e. people not entirely lazy and not entirely concerned with top performance – seek optimal balance).

* To test this idea they brought people into the lab, had them do a cognitive task (like a very simple math). They did it either alone or with partners. But there was another condition where the partner says “oh this stupid, I’m not going to try hard at this”. This was pitched as a collective task, your reward was based on your overall group performance. For those who had a partner that said that they were not going to work hard, they performance went up
* Collective (sum of output is added other) vs Coactive (each person’s effort is measured separately)
  + Participants actually performance better with a teammate that was doing poorly than when they were alone
  + When they were with a teammate that said they were going to try really hard, that is when the social loafing increased

Paks and Higgins (2000) - gender roles in social compensation

* Found that is the teammate was a girl social compensation went up, no matter if the other partner was a female or male
* You don’t actually see the other person, you were just told that there is a person in another room
* This is based on the sexist assumption that females were not as good at math
* When the teammate was male, social loafing increased, and the second teammate worked less hard

We get this social loafing and social facilitation only in a coactive condition not in a collective condition. You cannot measure each member’s individual effort when it is a coactive condition (??)