

The Self in a Social World

1. The Concept of SELF

- ☞ A key element in social psychology because it is the concept of SELF that is the personal point of interaction between society (other people) and the person
- ☞ The focus of soc psych is *how we relate, interact and influence one another*
- ☞ What sets you apart from other people

What are some examples of the interplay between self and others (a particular social setting)?

Social surroundings affect self-awareness

- ☞ we become more aware about our peculiarities, difference, uniqueness when in a different social setting

ex: we become more aware of our difference from other people when we are tourists

- ☞ fulfills the *self-fulfilling prophecy* by actually making us behave in a manner that would really make us stand out or be different/peculiar

Self-interest colors social judgment

- ☞ we do not usually blame ourselves for the problems we encounter – what about those who self-blame? ~ *low self-esteem*
- ☞ we like to attribute success to our selves, and failures as being caused by others

ex: the failure in an exam to the difficulty of the test (or we did not prepare enough), and success to the preparations we made prior the test

Self-concern motivates social behavior

- ☞ our actions are often strategic: self-image drives most of our behavior
- ex: cosmetics, making ourselves presentable; even altruistic behavior

Who am I?

Activity: before we begin the discussion about self-concept, take out a sheet of paper and write your strengths and weaknesses – *to illustrate the difference between self-concept and self-schema*

Self-concept - how we come to know ourselves ex. I am a Filipino, a student, etc.

☞ the great question: Who are you? I am _____.....

☞ our answer to “I am...” taken together is our *self-concept*

Self-schema - different from *self-concept*;

☞ *schema* = our mental template of how we would define ourselves; helps to retrieve information quicker

☞ “sub-categories” of our self-concept: I am this and that

****Possible Selves* – images of what we dream of or dread of ourselves to be ~ Hazel Markus

☞ Even if it is not actually a you, it becomes part of your SELF because this is what you want/dread of becoming

***our concept of SELF is vital to us as individuals, without it, it’s as if we did not exist

***from the perspective of social psychology, it is the cornerstone of our daily interactions with other people

Self-reference Effect – an example of how valuable our SELF is to us

☞ information that is most relevant to ourselves are processed quicker

☞ An example of the influence our *self-concept* has; it influences even our memory

☞ we view ourselves as center-stage; ex. We become self-conscious when entering a party, when in reality, very few people really pay attention to us

☞ our attention is easily caught when we hear our name ~ *selective attention*

☞ false memories of eye-witnesses are problematic

spotlight effect – we overestimate the amount of attention people are actually giving us

ex: when we accidentally committed an embarrassing behavior, we think everybody saw it

Our overall evaluation of ourselves

Self-esteem – a person's self-evaluation or sense of self-worth

****Self-esteem* is a psychological gauge by which we monitor and react to how others appraise us

Self-efficacy – how competent you feel about yourself, that you are “efficient”

☞ could be paralleled with *confidence*

Bottom-up View of Self-esteem – people must first help others feel better about themselves BEFORE their *self-esteem heightens*; psychologists must first make them feel more positive about themselves ~ *focusing on people's strengths ~ humanistic approach*

High self-schema + high possible self = high self-esteem

Top-down View of Self-esteem – opposite of *bottom-up view*

☞ people already feel good about themselves (*high self-esteem*) and so they see themselves as smart, attractive, etc. causing their *self-schemas* to be more positive

☞ high *self-esteem* in bad mood = positive memories; low *self-esteem* people in bad mood = negative memories

High self-esteem + High possible selves = high self-schema

2. Development of the Social Self

How does social self develop? ~ the role becomes (vs. consumes) you; you fit yourself into the idea of the role

Social Identity – Your social definition (your place in society): race, ethnicity, gender, degree

☞ We are more aware of our *social identity* when we are the minority

☞ We do not pay so much attention to what is common

Social Comparison – evaluating one's abilities and opinions by comparing oneself to others

☞ Makes us more aware or conscious of how we differ

☞ Serves either as a motivation or a source of frustration

Success and Failure Experiences – success makes people feel more competent.

**Success-Feeds-Self-esteem Principle*

☞ Sending positive messages to boost *self-esteem*; FEELINGS FOLLOW REALITY! – must be accompanied by actual success ex. Contestants in American Idol

Other people's judgments – when people think well of us, we feel better

Charles H. Cooley's *Looking Glass Self* – other people's judgments can influence the path of who you are; dangerous to adolescents who are just forming their identities.

**insert erik erikson's psycho-social dev't*

???Activity 1: Pick partners; A will write 10 description about themselves; B will write 10 perceptions about A; vice versa; 30 mins

Value of Self: What about others?

Self and Culture

Individualism – the concept of giving priority to one's own goals over group goals and defining one's identity in terms of personal attributes rather than group identifications.

**Independent Self*

☞ *Individualism* flourishes when people experience affluence, mobility, urbanism, and mass media – all characteristic of industrialized, “first world” countries

Collectivism – concept of giving priority to the goals of one's group (family or work group) and defining one's identity accordingly

**Interdependent Self* – greater sense of belonging; more deeply embedded with others

☞ *Self-esteem* correlates closely with “what others think of me and my group”

Ex: reality tv show about an american family who lived in a collectivist culture

WHY? ~ because of opportunities in first world to acquire personal success; in third world, they'd have to work together to survive.

- ☞ *Collectivism* flourishes where people are faced with shared threats
- ☞ There is a tendency for the *collectivist* to become “*individualized*” – the importance of SELF

3. Self-knowledge

- ☞ We do have plausible answers as to why we behaved the way that we do, but we OVER/UNDERESTIMATE external influence

Explaining our behavior

- ☞ According to experiments, we sometimes think that external influences have an effect on our behavior, when they don't and vice versa.

ex: people were told that placebo's would cause them to have symptoms of being given electric shocks, they thought what they were feeling was due to the pill, and so they tolerated more intense shocks than those not given the pill

ex: students were asked to rate a film, where a sawing machine roared. They thought the noise had an effect on their rating... it didn't

Predicting our behavior

- ☞ We also err in predicting our future behavior

WHY? – we could be over/underestimating the external forces that influence our behavior ~ *focus of social psychology*

Predicting our feelings

- ☞ We do have a certain amount of accuracy in predicting how we would feel
ex: when a relationship turns bad, or that we've never felt more “in love” with someone
- ☞ People overestimate how much their well-being would be affected by such things as gaining or losing weight, etc.
- ☞ After receiving devastating news, people cope better than they expected
- ☞ When not aroused, one easily MISPREDICTS how one will feel and act when aroused
- ☞ We are able to predict to which end of the spectrum our feelings would fall (ESPECIALLY WHEN THE REASONS ARE QUITE OBVIOUS); it's the gravity of our feelings that we cannot predict so accurately

***we are more aware of the results of our thinking rather than the thinking process that took place

Timothy Wilson proposed that the MENTAL PROCESSES that control our social behavior are DISTINCT from the mental processes through which we EXPLAIN our behavior

Self-reports are often untrustworthy! ~ the problem with self-reports in psychological tests

***we should be more careful when being dogmatic or firm about our own dispositions
~it might cause incongruence in what we think and in what we feel

***WISDOM IN SELF-ANALYSIS/INTROSPECTION

4. **Self-control**

☞ Effortful self-control depletes our willpower reserves

☞

Locus of Control – the extent to which people perceive outcomes as internally controllable by their own efforts and actions or as externally controlled by chance or outside forces

☞ People tend to be more successful, resilient and motivated when they view themselves as internally controlled ~ they never consider a situation to be bigger than themselves; ONE'S POWER OVER THE SITUATION!!!

***when people think that they have no control over their lives, our sense of SELF somewhat becomes wounded ex: the couple who were in a nursing home for quite some time, felt that they were “nonpersons”

Learned Helplessness – the hopelessness and resignation learned when a human or animal perceives no control over repeated bad events

Ex: battered women; rape victims; arguing with parents

5. **Enhancing our Self-image**

Are we all better than average?

Self-serving Bias – the tendency to perceive one's self favorably

☞ We usually accept credit for success, but attribute failure to external factors
ex. Manny Pacquiao's defeat blamed on his socks

- ☞ DEPRESSED people are more ACCURATE in doing SELF-APPRAISALS than non-depressed ~ they EXCUSE themselves FROM their FAILURE in laboratory tests
- ☞ IN EXPERIEMENTS: People who do not recognize their mistakes are less happier
- ☞ It is healthy for individuals to protect/VALUE themselves; this aids in the ENHANCEMENT of our SELF-ESTEEM, but we should always be careful of the perils of our pride

Unrealistic Optimism – underestimating our vulnerability to life events

- ☞ Dangerous since we would have the tendency not to take sensible precautions

***Optimism is healthy; it boosts our self-esteem, but we should always be realistic ex. American Idol; it was also found that depressed people were actually more realistic than non-depressed people.

Activity 2 (for false uniqueness): *each would write adjectives on a piece of paper describing their traits that make them unique; write on the board & compare with the rest. 10 mins. Do you still feel unique?*

***we also enhance our self-image by over/underestimating the extent to which other people behave like we do; especially true when we excuse ourselves ~ EVERYBODY IS DOING IT ANYWAY or I AM THE ONLY WHO CAN DO IT

False Uniqueness – the tendency to overestimate the commonality of one's abilities and one's desirable or successful behavior

False consensus – the tendency to overestimate the commonality of one's opinions and one's undesirable or unsuccessful behaviors

- ☞ Occurs because we GENERALIZE from a limited sample

Other self-serving tendencies:

1. we justify undesirable acts that cannot be forgotten
2. we use as judgment for others, dimensions where we excel in (intelligence, attractiveness, agility)
3. we believe things such as horoscopes that flatter us and vice versa
4. basking in reflected glory ex. A star attended my school

WHY the selfishness? – a defense mechanism to protect our self-esteem; it is more HEALTHY to ascribe POSITIVE feelings to OURSELVES than negative ones.

6. Presenting our selves to others

Self-presentation

- ☞ presenting ourselves to create a FAVORABLE IMPRESSION
- ☞ we do not only want to impress others, but OURSELVES as well

***when we think we've impressed others, we also impress ourselves

- ☞ sometimes differently from how we really feel

False Modesty

- ☞ self-serving in that it is generally more socially acceptable to be humble
- ☞ elicits reassuring “strokes”
- ☞ during a game, a win is an achievement, while loss is attributed to incompetence

HOW DO WE DIFFERENTIATE FROM HUMILITY?

- ☞ False modesty stems from our wish to be reassured of our good qualities

Self-handicapping – protecting one's self-image with behaviors that create a handy excuse for failure

Self-monitoring – being attuned to the way one presents oneself in a social situation and adjusting one's performance to create the desired impression

***all these convey the depth of our concern for self-image

- ☞ we become less self-conscious when in a familiar situation

ARE WE ALL SIMPLY SELFISH???

- ☞ These self-enhancing strategies help to boost our self-concepts, thereby making us “healthier” people; when we are HEALTHY, we are less likely to BERATE people, to be THIN-SKINNED.