Chapter 10: Theoretical and Applied Psychology after the Great War

PSK306-History of Psychology
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Social Climate and Psychology

- Development of university-based research
- Further medicalization of deviance
- Social exclusion
- Development of applied studies
- Attention to mental hygiene
Psychological Testing

Psychologists believed that their discipline could offer scientific solutions to social problems. Psychological testing was a field of research where psychologists believed that they could evaluate, select, and train people for various purposes ranging from education to sports and business to manufacturing. Of all kinds of testing, research of mental abilities continued to attract attention of psychologists and their sponsors in government and private business.
The Army Testing Project (1917-1918)

**Method:** the Army Alpha for literate groups and the Army Beta for those who were illiterate

**Subjects:** newly enlisted individuals in the U.S. Army, 1.7 million people

**Findings:** The project revealed that the average mental age of the Army recruits at that time was approximately 13 years, which was considered 2 years lower than the expected average mental age of the White adult population of the United States.

**Results:** Overall, the results of the Army Testing Project did not bring significant changes to the way the military selected and placed its recruits. However, tests became an important supplementary source of assessment in schools and businesses.
The Ellis Island Testing

An 1882 immigration law excluded any potential immigrant who was “likely to become a public charge,” and from 1907 onward, medical evidence could be cited to support immigration restrictions. Congress explicitly referred to “imbeciles” and the “feebleminded” as people who should be excluded from admission to the United States.

Howard A. Knox, an assistant surgeon at the immigration station, agreed and assembled a collection of tests, including the Binet test, a geometry test, and a test on knowledge of everyday issues. Each candidate for testing was selected from a sample of newly arrived. Most individuals taking the exams used the help of interpreters.

Results: As an example, in 1913, on the basis of test results, more than 500 people had been deported from the United States as mentally defective. This represented a threefold increase in comparison with the number of people excluded in the 5 previous years without testing.
The Iowa Child Welfare Station

The Iowa Child Welfare Station was founded in 1917 as a research institution to study the behavior and skills of ordinary children under everyday conditions.

The Iowa Station is known for its contribution to the nature-nurture debate of the 1930s. Researchers at the station developed and defended a genuinely progressive idea that deliberate, comprehensive, and psychologically sound “intervention” of qualified educators in the child’s life should bring significant results.

However, critics suggested that the researchers were biased in their observations and, therefore, had committed serious methodological errors that affected the results of their studies.
Hawthorne Experiments

- Increase in Productivity
- Increase in Satisfaction

- Treating workers with respect.
- Paying attention to their requests.
- Promoting positive atmosphere.
Psychology of Development and Cognition

Lev Vygotsky’s views of consciousness and the child’s development continue to generate interest in the 21st century.

1896–1934
The Theory of
Highest Psychological Functions

Human consciousness should be understood in the context of interaction of an individual with the outside world. In fact, Vygotsky, in a symbolic way, placed the soul outside the human body!
Vygotsky’s Understanding of Cognitive Development

• «Speech» is a special tool. Human use speech as a machine. By speech human changes both external and internal world.

• Every psychological function occurs as a result of communication.
Vygotsky Zone of Proximal Development

The difference between a child’s learning progress with help or guidance and this child’s learning achievement without the guidance of an adult.

The task of education is no to offer something that the child is ready to perform. It is greater!

Children can do better by the help of educators or psychologists. To do this, two tasks should be achieved.

• Providing detailed information about what specifically each child’s zone
• Creating tasks to assist children in developing their skills and knowledge
Developmental Ideas of Jean Piaget

Jean Piaget (1896–1980) remains one of the most prominent psychologists of the 20th century. His original model of developmental stages has received significant support in further studies conducted over 50 years in different countries.

Piaget’s original ideas about the stage-by-stage development of children’s moral values, political beliefs, and even geographical concepts have found applications in educational programs in many countries.

Piaget’s theory explains well how children deal with conservation of volume, weight, and amount.
Several scientific and social traditions had an impact on the studies of personality:

First, it was the empirical and experimental tradition rooted in Galton’s views and methods. Personality according to this view was not an abstract concept but a measurable combination of features and traits, some stable constructs of an individual’s behavior and thinking.

Second, it was the tradition of French clinical experimentation, based on methods distinguishing a fully functional personality from a dysfunctional, problematic, or pathological one.

Third, it was a largely American tradition emphasizing the importance of moral features in an individual’s behavior. Overall, the individual was viewed as a collection of stable, distinct, and measurable characteristics or traits, the sum total of which equaled his or her personality.
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Early Social Psychology

- Theories of Social Instincts
- Theories of Social Judgments
- Experimental Social Psychology
Early Theories of Social Instincts

- Reductionist ideas which believe that individuals become the living parts of a larger social organism when they join a social group.

- Aggression in groups is viewed as normal and natural

- Remember Bekhterev’s ideas on social reflexes.
Early Experimental Social Psychology

Norman Triplett: People perform tasks differently when they are in groups

Floyd Allport: In groups, the individual’s behavior is influenced by the perception of others engaged in the same activity (facilitation or rivalry)

Muzafar Sherif: Groups made a collective decision making and reluctant to change their decision later on.

Solomon Asch: Conformity experiments

Jacob Moreno: Psychodrama
Theories of Social Judgments

LaPiere: Studied prejudice against Chinese people

Heider: When we are observing the behavior of other people, we tend to overestimate our internal causes and pay less attention to external causes or circumstances affecting our behavior (later named as fundamental attribution error)

Festinger: Cognitive dissonance