Why study the self in *social* psychology?

- Recall that social psychology is the study of how people
  - Think about
  - Influence, and
  - Relate to one another (or interact within situations)
- The self influences all of these
The Center of Our World: Ourselves

• **Spotlight Effect:**
  – We over-estimate how much others are attending to us.
    • Barry Manilow t-shirt study (Gilovich et al, 2000)
      – Guess 50%; actually 23%

• **Illusion of Transparency**
  – We think our emotions are easily detected by others; they are not.

• **Cocktail Party Effect**
  – In a noisy room, we can still hear our names being said.

Self Concept

• **Self-concept** – “Who am I?”
  – Self-schemas: beliefs about ourselves that help us process and organize our world
    • Affects what you pay attention to, how quickly you process information, and what you remember
  – Social self – We have multiple selves
    • Roles
    • Social identities
  – Self-knowledge – “How can I explain and predict myself?”
Development of Self-Concept

• Social experience
  – Self-perceptions
    • Roles (daughter, son, lover, treasurer, etc.)
    • Social identities (fraternity/sorority member, band member, member of football team, trekkies, etc.)
  – Social Comparison
    • Who am I? Depends on who I’m comparing myself with.
      – Upward, similar others, downward
  – Our successes and failures
  – How others judge us
    • “looking glass self”: we are as we think others see us
  – Surrounding culture
    • Our culture affects how we view ourselves
      – Collectivistic / Individualistic

The Self and How We Relate to One Another

• Independent vs. Interdependent self

  In-group  Out-group  In-group  Out-group
  Self

  – Content of interactions (e.g., praise)
  – Ingroup vs. outgroup relations (ingroup = self)
  – Close relationships (OIS; other in self)
  – Explaining successes (example: BIRGing)
The Self and How We Interact With Situations

- Self Complexity Theory (Linville)
  - People have multiple selves and these selves may overlap to varying degrees
    - Low = overlapping
    - High = non-overlapping
  - How people respond to success and failure
    - Those who are low in self-complexity respond more extremely to both success and failure. Higher highs; lower lows.
  - The extent to which the selves overlap influences our mental health
    - But, it depends on how much control we feel we have over our multiple selves; higher perceived control, better mental health

How Well Do We Know Ourselves?

- Explaining and predicting our behavior
  - How likely are you to vote in the upcoming election?__
  - If 180 Purdue students were asked, what percentage of these people do you think would vote in the upcoming election?__
    - Our guesses of others’ behaviors are often better predictors of our own behaviors.
  - Also: obedience, bystander responsiveness, suicide baiting
How Well Do We Know Ourselves?

• Predicting our feelings
  – In general, how happy are you now?
    Not at all 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Extremely
  – Imagine that you were involved in an accident and were paralyzed below the waist due to injuries you suffered. How happy would you be?
    Not at all 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Extremely
  How happy do you think you would be a year after the accident?
    Not at all 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Extremely

This issue is called “affective forecasting”

The Self and Influence

• Self Awareness Theory
  – Public self-awareness
    • More likely to follow external expectations
  – Private self-awareness
    • More likely to follow internalized norms and beliefs

• What can trigger self-awareness?

• Primes and self-assimilation
  – intelligent-skilful-industrious-determined-practical-cautious