The Social approach

Milgram (1963) – Behavioural study into obedience
Reicher and Haslam (2006) – Rethinking the psychology of tyranny
Piliavin (1969) – Good Samaritan – an underground phenomenon?

Assumptions

1) Behaviour is influenced by actual, imagined or implied presence of others
2) Interactions with other people affect the way we feel, think and behave
3) Study of behaviour in groups, crowds and in ‘public’

Strengths and Weaknesses

Strengths of Social Approach | Example from Core Study
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Explains influence of the interpersonal interactions on our behaviour | Milgrams study of obedience to authority
Explains our behaviour in a group situation | Piliavin, helping strangers in public places

Weaknesses of Social Approach | Example from Core Study
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Ethical issues – difficult to conduct an experiment that is ethically sound | Reicher and Haslam, psychological harm through deindividuation
Often lab experiments which are low in ecological validity | Reicher and Haslam, made up prison where IV was manipulated (permeability and cognitive alternatives)
Ethnocentric – most sociological research is from USA | Milgram was conducted in America

Similarities and differences between studies

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<th>Studies</th>
<th>Similarity</th>
<th>Difference</th>
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<tr>
<td>Milgram and Reicher and Haslam</td>
<td>Ethnocentric – US/UK</td>
<td>Obedience to authority / conditions under which groups conform</td>
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<tr>
<td>Milgram and Piliavin</td>
<td>Deception</td>
<td>Sample size 40 / 4,450</td>
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<td>Piliavin and Reicher and Haslam</td>
<td>Both quantitative and qualitative data</td>
<td>Bystander behaviour / conformity to allocated social roles</td>
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