Predictability
• Predicting behaviour

Quantitative (experimental)
• Based on statistical analysis, probabilities, making qualifying statements based on statistical analysis

Hypothetico-deductive approach
• Start with a theory/guiding idea, and through deduction, derive hypothesis, which we then test through experimentation, and through induction we may revise the theory/guiding idea on the basis of experimentation
• Popper believes that science progresses through falsification – we can never prove something is true

Example of empirical research
• Milgram (1963): laboratory experiment in exploring obedience
• Sherif (1937); Asch (1951, 1956) – the extent to which social influence affects perception task judgements
• Latané & Darley (1970) – the ways in which our perception of a situation determines whether we help others or not
• Tajfel (1969) – how our perception of whether others belong to the same group as us or not shapes our behaviour towards them
• Hatfield et al. (2007): how our perceptions of the costs and rewards of being in relationships can shape our satisfaction with them (equity theory)
• Dutton & Aron (1974): tested the misattribution of arousal as a field experiment (less ability to control the experimental conditions in the laboratory – subjects randomly allocated as researchers had no control over which men walked on which bridge)

Critical Psychology

❖ Wundt (1904): key figure in social psychology whom established experimental approaches in psychology, yet he argued that this approach should be supplemented with folk psychology that is concerned with language, myth and custom; social psychological phenomena are best investigated using experiments that approach the cultural and historical context of social communities – often neglected
❖ McDougall (1908): social behaviour cannot simply be reduced to the sum of individual psychological processes – neglected
❖ Social psychology became more individualistic in focus: while it claims to be about social phenomena, it often emphasises on individual’s social cognitions and draw attention away from societal issues – implicit endorses the status quo (only change in individual’s mind can fix the problem)
❖ Social psychological theories often emphasise how the individual perceives the social world and depict this as the being at the root of their behaviour in interaction with others
❖ ‘Individualising’ social psychology theories could be understood as reflecting assumptions that are present in much of social psychology and in many Western cultures in general