Social Intelligence

تأليف

mohammad looti

June 5, 2026

Social intelligence describes the exclusively human capacity to use very large brains to effectively navigate and negotiate complex social relationships and environments. Psychologist and professor at the London School of Economics Nicholas Humphrey believes it is social intelligence or the richness of our qualitative life, rather than our quantitative intelligence, that truly makes humans what they are - for example what it's like to be a human being living at the centre of the conscious present, surrounded by smells and tastes and feels and the sense of being an extraordinary metaphysical entity with properties which hardly seem to belong to the physical world. Social scientist Ross Honeywill believes social intelligence is an aggregated measure of self and social awareness, evolved social beliefs and attitudes, and a capacity and appetite to manage complex social change. A person with a high social intelligence quotient (SQ) is no better or worse .than someone with a low SQ, they just have different attitudes, hopes, interests and desires

(Social Intelligence Quotient (SQ

The social intelligence quotient or SQ is a statistical abstraction similar to the 'standard score' approach used in IQ tests with a mean of 100. Unlike the standard IQ test however it is not a fixed model. It leans more to Piaget's theory that intelligence is not a fixed attribute but a complex hierarchy of information-processing skills underlying an adaptive equilibrium between the individual and the environment. An individual can therefore change their SQ by altering their attitudes and behaviour in response to their complex social .environment

Social Intelligence Hypothesis

The 'Social Intelligence Hypothesis' in science asserts that complex socialization - politics, romance, family relationships, quarrels, making-up, collaboration, reciprocity, altruism - in short, social intelligence (1) was the driving force in developing the size of human brains and (2) today provides our ability to use those large brains in complex social circumstances. It was the demands of living together that drove our need for .'intelligence. This idea is called the 'Social Intelligence Hypothesis

Professor of early history at Reading University, Steve Mithen, believes there are two key periods of brain expansion that contextualize the social intelligence hypothesis. The first was around two million years ago when brains expanded by about 50%. So humans went from brain size of around 450cc to a brain size of around 1,000cc by 1.8 million years ago. Archaeologists noting this change in primates asked; why are brains getting larger and what is it providing? Brains wouldn't get larger just for any reasons because brain tissue is metabolically very expensive, so has to be serving an important purpose. Mithen believes the social intelligence hypothesis suggests the expansion of brain size around two million years ago was because people were living in larger groups, more complex groups, having to keep track of different people, a larger number of social relationships that required a larger brain to do so. Social intelligence therefore gives us the answer .to that first expansion of brain size two million years ago

The second increase in brain size happened between 600,000 and 200,000 years ago, and during that period the brain reached its modern capacity. Trying to explain that second expansion in brain size is still a very

challenging question. Mithen's view is that it is directly related to the evolution of language. Language is probably the most complex cognitive task we undertake. Language is directly related to social intelligence because we mainly use language to mediate our social relationships. So social intelligence was a critical factor in the expansions of brain size - there is a co-evolution between social and cognitive complexity. And today .social intelligence is pivotal in managing the complexity of being social animals

How is Intelligence Different to Social Intelligence

It's not enough just to be clever according to Professor Nicholas Humphrey. Autistic children, for example, are sometimes extremely clever. They're very good at making observations and remembering it all. However, it is argued they have low social intelligence. Chimpanzees are very clever at the level of being able to make observations and remember things. They can remember better than humans can, but they, again, are inept at handling interpersonal relationships. So something else is needed. What is needed is a theory of mind, a theory of how other people work from the inside. For a long time the field was dominated by so-called behaviourism. Scientists thought they could understand human beings, rats, pigeons, just by watching what goes on, writing it all down, doing correlations and so on. It turns out you can't. It has to be thought about .in terms of the inner structure behaviour

Both Nicholas Humphrey and Ross Honeywill believe it is social intelligence or the richness of our qualitative life rather than our quantitative intelligence that truly makes humans what they are - for example what it's like to be a human being living at the centre of the conscious present, surrounded by smells and tastes and feels and the sense of being an extraordinary metaphysical entity with properties which hardly seem to .belong to the physical world. This is social intelligence

Additional Views

Social intelligence is closely related to cognition and emotional intelligence, and can also be seen as a first level in developing systems intelligence. Research psychologists studying social cognition and social neuroscience have discovered many principles which human social intelligence operates. In early work on this topic, psychologists Nancy Cantor and John Kihlstrom outlined the kinds of concepts people use to make sense of their social relations (e.g., What situation am I in and what kind of person is this who is talking to me?), and the rules they use to draw inferences (What did he mean by that?) and plan actions (What am I (?going to do about it

More recently, popular science writer Daniel Goleman has drawn on social neuroscience research to propose that social intelligence is made up of social awareness (including empathy, attunement, empathic accuracy, and social cognition) and social facility (including synchrony, self-presentation, influence, and concern). Goleman's immense research indicates that our social relationships have a direct affect on our physical health and the deeper the relationship the deeper the impact. Goleman states that some physical effects of our relationships upon our health are the blood flow of one's body, one's breathing, our mood, such as fatigue and .depression,and can even decrease the power of our immune system

Educational researcher Raymond H. Hartjen asserts that expanded opportunities for social interaction enhances intelligence. Traditional classrooms do not permit the interaction of complex social behavior. Instead children in traditional settings are treated as learners who must be infused with more and more complex forms of information. Few educational leaders he adduces have taken this position as a starting point to develop a school environment where social interaction could flourish.If we follow this line of thinking then children must have an opportunity for continuous every day interpersonal experiences in order to develop a keen well developed 'inter-personal psychology'.As schools are structured today very few of these skills, critical for survival in the real world, are allowed to develop. Because we so limit the development of the skills of "natural psychologist" in traditional schools our students as graduates, enter the job market handicapped to the point of being incapable of surviving on their own.In contrast those students that have had an ability to develop their skills as a "natural psychologist" in multiage classrooms and at democratic settings rise head and shoulders over their less socially skilled peers. They have a good sense of .self, know what they want out of life and have the skills necessary to begin their quest

Measuring social intelligence

Social Intelligence or SQ is a statistical abstraction similar to the 'standard score' approach used in IQ tests with a mean of 100. Scores of 140 or above are considered to be very high. SQ has until recently been measured by techniques such as question and answer sessions. These sessions assess the person's pragmatic abilities to test eligibility in certain special education courses, however some tests have been developed to measure social intelligence. One of these is the EQ (Emotional Intelligence) test. This test can be used when diagnosing autism spectrum disorders, including autism and Asperger syndrome. Other, non-autistic or semi-autistic conditions such as semantic pragmatic disorder or SPD, schizophrenia, dyssemia and ADHD, are also of relevance. This test can also be used when assessing people that might have some sort of a disorder such .as schizophrenia or ADHD

People with low SQ are more suited to low customer contact roles, since they may not have the required interpersonal communication and social skills for success on the frontline.These people may work better in an occupation that limits social interaction.People with SQs over 120 are considered socially skilled, and may work well with jobs that involve direct contact and communication with other people. The following example chart shows (assuming a person aged 17 is being tested, with an average SQ of 100 for that age) :how a person's social age can be higher or lower based on scores in the SQ test

SQ	Social Age
120 (above average - socially mature for age)	20.4
110	18.7
100 (average)	17
90	15.3
80	13.6
70 (below this level, help is recommended)	11.9

60 10.2
50 8.5
40 6.8
30 5.1
20 3.4

Social neuroscience

Social neuroscience is an interdisciplinary field devoted to understanding how biological systems implement social processes and behavior, and to using biological concepts and methods to inform and refine theories of social processes and behavior. Humans are fundamentally a social species, rather than individualists. As such, Homo sapiens create emergent organizations beyond the individual--structures that range from dyads, families, and groups to cities, civilizations, and cultures. These emergent structures evolved hand in hand with neural and hormonal mechanisms to support them because the consequent social behaviors helped these organisms survive, reproduce, and care for offspring sufficiently long that they too survived to reproduce. The term "social neuroscience" can be traced to a publication entitled "Social Neuroscience Bulletin" that was published quarterly between 1988 and 1994. The term was subsequently popularized in an article by John Cacioppo and Gary Berntson, published in the American Psychologist in 1992. Cacioppo and Berntson are considered as the legitimate fathers of social neuroscience. Still a young field, social neuroscience is closely related to affective neuroscience and cognitive neuroscience, focusing on how the brain mediates social .interactions

Overview

Traditional neuroscience has for many years considered the nervous system as an isolated entity and largely ignored influences of the social environments in which humans and many animal species live. In fact, we now recognize the considerable impact of social structures on the operations of the brain and body. These social factors operate on the individual through a continuous interplay of neural, neuroendocrine, metabolic and immune factors on brain and body, in which the brain is the central regulatory organ and also a malleable target of these factors. Social neuroscience investigates the biological mechanisms that underlie social processes and behavior, widely considered one of the major problem areas for the neurosciences in the 21st century, and applies concepts and methods of biology to develop theories of social processes and behavior in the social and behavioral sciences. Social neuroscience capitalizes on biological concepts and methods to inform and refine theories of social behavior, and it uses social and behavioral constructs and .data to advance theories of neural organization and function

Throughout most of the 20th century, social and biological explanations were widely viewed as incompatible. But advances in recent years have led to the development of a new approach synthesized from the social and biological sciences. The new field of social neuroscience emphasizes the complementary relationship between the different levels of organization, spanning the social and biological domains (e.g., molecular, cellular,

system, person, relational, collective, societal) and the use of multi-level analyses to foster understanding of the mechanisms underlying the human mind and behavior.

Methods

A number of methods are used in social neuroscience to investigate the confluence of neural and social processes (drawing from behavioral techniques developed in social psychology, cognitive psychology, and neuropsychology), associated with a variety of neurobiological techniques including functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI), transcranial magnetic stimulation, event-related potentials, electrocardiograms, electromyograms, endocrinology, galvanic skin response, and studies of focal brain lesion patients. Animal models are also important to investigate the putative role of specific brain structures, circuits, or processes (e.g., the reward system and drug addiction). In addition, quantitative meta-analyses are important to move beyond idiosyncrasies of individual studies, and neurodevelopmental investigations can contribute to our understanding of brain-behavior associations.

Society for social neuroscience

A dinner to discuss the challenges and opportunities in the interdisciplinary field of social neuroscience at the Society for Neuroscience meeting (Chicago, November 2009) resulted in a series of meetings led by John Cacioppo and Jean Decety with social neuroscientists, psychologists, neuroscientists, psychiatrists and neurologists in Argentina, Australia, Chile, China, Colombia, Hong Kong, Israel, Japan, The Netherlands, New Zealand, Singapore, South Korea, Taiwan, The United Kingdom, and The United States. Social neuroscience was defined broadly as the interdisciplinary study of the neural, hormonal, cellular, and genetic mechanisms underlying the emergent structures that define social species. Thus, among the participants in these meetings were scientists who used a wide variety of methods in studies of animals as well as humans, and patients as well as normal participants. The consensus also emerged that a Society for Social Neuroscience should be established to give scientists from diverse disciplines and perspectives the opportunity to meet, communicate with, and benefit from the work of each other. The international, interdisciplinary Society for social neuroscience (http://S4SN.org) was launched at the conclusion of these consultations in Auckland, New Zealand on 20 January 2010, and the inaugural meeting for the Society was held on November 12, 2010, the day prior to the 2010 Society for Neuroscience meeting (San Diego, CA).

Empathic accuracy

Empathic accuracy is a term in psychology that refers to how accurately one person (usually designated the perceiver) can infer the thoughts and feelings of another person (usually designated the target). It was first introduced in conjunction with a new research method by psychologists William Ickes and William Tooke in 1988. It is similar to the term accurate empathy, which psychologist Carl Rogers had previously introduced in 1957. Empathic accuracy is an important aspect of what William Ickes has called "everyday mind reading".

Measurement

Empathic accuracy became an active topic of psychological research beginning in the 1990s. The impetus for its study was the development by William Ickes and his colleagues of a method to measure the accuracy of a perceiver's inferences about the content of a target person's reported thoughts and feelings. In this method, the perceiver is asked to view a videotaped interaction that was previously recorded. The videotape is paused for the perceiver at each of the points at which a target person on the videotape had reported having a specific thought or feeling, and the perceiver's task to write down the inferred content of each thought or feeling. Because the researchers have a list of the actual thoughts and feelings that the target person reported at the various "stop points," they can compare the content of each inferred thought or feeling with the actual .thought or feeling and assess the level of the perceiver's empathic accuracy

Research

Over the past two decades, dozens of studies of empathic accuracy have been reported. These studies address :a wide range of topics that include the following

the upper limit of empathic accuracy
the empathic accuracy of professional therapists
whether women are more empathically accurate than men
whether friends are more empathically accurate than strangers
whether empathic accuracy is influenced by motivational factors
what information channels contribute the most to empathic accuracy
what areas of brain function are associated with empathic accuracy
the role of empathic inaccuracy in marital discord and spousal abuse
the role of empathic accuracy in autism and Borderline Personality Disorder
the role of empathic accuracy in relationship satisfaction and social support
the role of empathic accuracy in the peer relations and adjustment of young adolescents

An early summary of the research on empathic accuracy can be found in an edited volume titled Empathic Accuracy (1997). A more recent summary is available in a single-author book titled Everyday Mind .(Reading: Understanding What Other People Think and Feel (2009

Social cognition

Social cognition is the encoding, storage, retrieval, and processing, in the brain, of information relating to conspecifics, or members of the same species. At one time social cognition referred specifically to an approach to social psychology in which these processes were studied according to the methods of cognitive psychology and information processing theory. However the term has come to be more widely used across psychology and cognitive neuroscience. For example, it is used to refer to various social abilities disrupted in autism and other disorders. In cognitive neuroscience the biological basis of social cognition is investigated.

.Developmental psychologists study the development of social cognition abilities

Historical development

Social cognition came to prominence with the rise of cognitive psychology in the late 1960s and early 1970s and is now the dominant model and approach in mainstream social psychology. Common to social cognition theories is the idea that information is represented in the brain as "cognitive elements"--such as schemas, attributions, or stereotypes--and a focus on how these cognitive elements are processed. Social cognition therefore applies and extends many themes, theories and paradigms from cognitive psychology, for example in reasoning (representativeness heuristic, base rate fallacy and confirmation bias), attention (automaticity and priming) and memory (schemas, primacy and recency). It is very likely that social psychology was always a lot more cognitive than mainstream psychology to begin with, as it traditionally discussed internal mental states such as beliefs and desires when mainstream psychology was dominated by behaviourism and .rejected them as illusory

A notable theory of social cognition is social schema theory, although this is not the basis of all studies of social cognition (for example, see attribution theory). It has been suggested that other disciplines in social psychology such as social identity theory and social representations may be seeking to explain largely the same phenomena as social cognition and that these different disciplines might be merged into a "coherent integrated whole". A parallel paradigm has arisen in the study of action, termed motor cognition. Motor .cognition is concerned with understanding the representation of action and the associated process

Social schemas

Social schema theory builds on and uses terminology from schema theory in cognitive psychology which describes how ideas, or "concepts" from the world around us are represented in the brain, and how they are categorized. According to this view, when we see or think of a concept, a mental representation or schema is "activated", bringing to mind other information which is linked to the original concept by association. This activation often happens unconsciously. As a result of activating such schemas, judgements are formed which go beyond the information actually available, since many of the associations the schema evokes extend outside the given information. This may influence thinking and social behavior regardless of whether these judgements are accurate or not. For example, if an individual is introduced as a teacher, a "teacher schema" may be activated and we might associate this person with wisdom or authority, or past experiences of .teachers that we have remembered and are important to us

When a schema is more accessible this means it can more quickly be activated and used in a particular situation. Two cognitive processes that increase the accessibility of schemas are salience and priming. Salience is the degree to which a particular social object stands out relative to other social objects in a situation. The higher the salience of an object the more likely that schemas for that object will be made accessible. For example, if there is one female in a group of seven males, female gender schemas may be more

accessible and influence the group's thinking and behavior toward the female group member. Priming refers to any experience immediately prior to a situation that causes a schema to be more accessible. For example watching a scary movie at a theatre late at night might increase the accessibility of frightening schemas that affect a person's perception of shadows and background noises as potential threats. Priming happens because of the functions of the reticular cortex.

Social cognition researchers are also interested in how new information is integrated into pre-established schemas, especially when that information is contrary with those pre-established schemas. Pre-established schemas tend to guide attention to new information. People selectively attend to information that is consistent with the schema and ignore information that is inconsistent. This is referred to as a confirmation bias. Sometimes inconsistent information is sub-categorized and stored away as a special case, leaving the original schema intact without any alterations. This is referred to as subtyping.

Social cognition researchers are also interested in studying the regulation of activated schemas. It is believed that the situational activation of schemas is automatic, meaning that it is outside the control of the individual. In many situations however, the schematic information that has been activated may be in conflict with the social norms of the situation, in which case an individual is motivated to inhibit the influence of the schematic information on their thinking and social behavior. Whether a person will successfully regulate the application of the activated schemas is dependent on individual differences in self-regulatory ability and the presence of situational impairments to executive control. High self-regulatory ability and the lack of situational impairments on executive functioning increase the likelihood that individuals will successfully inhibit the influence of automatically activated schemas on their thinking and social behavior. However, when people stop suppressing the influence of the unwanted thoughts, a rebound effect can occur where the thought becomes hyper-accessible.

ر

Social cognitive neuroscience

Early interest in the relationship between brain function and social cognition includes the case of Phineas Gage, whose behavior was reported to have changed after an accident damaged one or both of his frontal lobes. More recent neuropsychological studies have shown that brain injuries disrupt social cognitive processes. For example, damage to the frontal lobes can affect emotional responses to social stimuli, performance on Theory of Mind tasks. In the temporal lobe, damage to the fusiform gyrus can lead to the inability to recognize faces.

People with psychological disorders such as autism, Williams syndrome, Antisocial Personality Disorder, Fragile X and Turner's syndrome show differences in social behavior compared to their unaffected peers. Parents with Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) show disturbances in at least one aspect of social cognition: namely, joint attention with their young children only after a laboratory-induced relational stressor as compared to healthy parents without PTSD. However, whether social cognition is underpinned by domain

.specific neural mechanisms is still an open issue

There is now an expanding research field examining how such conditions may bias cognitive processes involved in social interaction, or conversely, how such biases may lead to the symptoms associated with the .condition

The development of social cognitive processes in infants and children has also been researched extensively (see Developmental Psychology). For example, it has been suggested that some aspects of psychological processes that promote social behavior (such as face recognition) may be innate. Consistent with this, very young babies recognize and selectively respond to social stimuli such as the voice, face and scent of their .mother