

The End of History in Psychology

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Abstract

Histories of psychology often give the impression that the Cognitive Revolution, and the widespread embrace of the cognitive point of view, represents the last stage in the history of the science, toward which it has been inevitably progressing – much as the end of the Cold War was taken by some to reflect the end of political history. Nevertheless, a look at developments since the 1960s suggest that there is a lot of history still to be written. Continuing the political metaphor, we can identify a series of further revolutions and counterrevolutions that challenge the hegemony of the cognitive point of view. These include an affective counterrevolution, the automaticity juggernaut, the rise of evolutionary and cultural psychology, and a neuroscientific revolution. In addition to these debates over the theory, the field has undergone a series of crises challenging how psychology is done. These include the ethics of human (and animal) research, methodological concerns about ecological validity, demand characteristics, and experimenter bias; empirical failures to predict specific behavior from generalized traits and attitudes; statistical objections to null-hypothesis statistical testing; critiques of WEIRD psychology; and the replication crisis, leading to the Open Science revolution.