

# Counterfactual and Causal Explanation: From Early Theoretical Views to New Frontiers

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In the present talk, I trace the evolution of thinking in psychology about the relationship between counterfactual and causal explanation. Early work emphasized the “cue-like” role of counterfactual thinking in determining “the cause” of a single-case outcome. Later work, however, highlighted a number of empirical and theoretical challenges to the early view. Notably, demonstrations that the contents of counterfactual and causal explanations of single-case outcomes predictably diverged in content led to a subsequent round of effort geared toward theoretical reformation. I examine the two main lines along which this reformation took place and address some of the challenges that they, in turn, have faced.