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# **Social Psychology**

# **Social Psychology**

*Third Edition*

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# Campfire queen Cycling champion Sentimental geologist\*

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# Brief Contents

*Preface* xi

- 1 Understanding Social Behavior 1**
- 2 The Social Self 29**
- 3 Social Perception: Understanding Other People 61**
- 4 Prejudice and Discrimination 103**
- 5 Attitudes 155**
- 6 Persuasion and Attitude Change 185**
- 7 Conformity, Compliance, and Obedience 231**
- 8 Group Processes 281**
- 9 Interpersonal Attraction and Close Relationships 315**
- 10 Interpersonal Aggression 357**
- 11 Prosocial Behavior and Altruism 401**
- Glossary G-1**
- References R-1**
- Name Index I-1**
- Subject Index I-11**



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# Contents

Preface **xi**

## **1 Understanding Social Behavior 1**

### *Social Psychology and the Understanding of Social Behavior 2*

A Model for Understanding Social Behavior 3  
Expanding Lewin's Model 5

### *Social Psychology and Related Fields 7*

#### *Research in Social Psychology 9*

Experimental Research 10  
Correlational Research 15  
Settings for Social Psychological Research 16  
The Role of Theory in Social Psychological Research 16

What Do We Learn from Research in Social Psychology? 20

Ethics and Social Psychological Research 21

#### *Rick Rescorla and 9/11 Revisited 22*

#### *Chapter Review 24*

## **2 The Social Self 29**

### *Self-Concept 30*

Self-Knowledge: How We Know Thyself? 30  
The Self and Memory 32  
Religion and the Self 34  
The Self: The Influence of Groups and Culture 35

### *Self-Esteem: Evaluating the Self 40*

Internal Influences on Self-Esteem 41  
Self-Esteem and Stigma 44  
Self-Esteem and Cultural Influences 45  
What's So Good about High Self-Esteem? 45  
Implicit and Explicit Self-Esteem 46

### *Self-Control: How People Regulate Their Behavior 46*

Self-Control and Self-Regulation 46  
The Cost and Ironic Effects of Self-Control 48

### *Thinking about Ourselves 49*

Self-Serving Cognitions 49  
Maintaining Self-Consistency 50

### *Self-Awareness 51*

Self-Knowledge and Self-Awareness 52

### *Managing Self-Presentations 53*

Self-Esteem and Impression Management 53  
Self-Monitoring and Impression Management 53  
Self-Presentation and Manipulative Strategies 54  
Self-Handicapping 54

### *The Impression We Make on Others 56*

### *The Life of James Carroll Revisited 57*

### *Chapter Review 58*

## **3 Social Perception: Understanding Other People 61**

### *Impression Formation: Automaticity and Social Perception 63*

Automatic Processing 63

### *The Impression Others Make on Us: How Do We "Read" People? 69*

How Accurate Are Our Impressions? 69  
Confidence and Impression Formation 70  
If at First You Don't Like Someone, You May Never Like Them 70  
Person Perception: Reading Faces and Catching Liars 71

### *The Attribution Process: Deciding Why People Act As They Do 74*

Heider's Early Work on Attribution 74  
Correspondent Inference Theory 75  
Covariation Theory 76  
Dual-Process Models 78  
Intentionality and Attributions 79

### *Attribution Biases 80*

Misattributions 80  
The Fundamental Attribution Error 81  
The Actor-Observer Bias 83  
The False Consensus Bias 84

### *Constructing an Impression of Others 84*

The Significance of First Impressions 84  
Schemas 85  
The Confirmation Bias 87  
Shortcuts to Reality: Heuristics 88



*Positive Psychology: Optimism, Cognition, Health, and Life* 90

- Optimism and Cognition 90
- Optimism and Health 90
- Optimism and Happiness 91
- Cognitive Optimism: An Evolutionary Interpretation 95
- Bottom Line 95

*The Vincennes Revisited* 96

*Chapter Review* 96

**4 Prejudice and Discrimination 103**

*The Dynamics of Prejudice, Stereotypes, and Discrimination* 104

- Prejudice 104
- Stereotypes 106
- Discrimination 112

*The Persistence and Recurrence of Prejudice and Stereotypes* 112

*Individual Differences and Prejudice: Personality and Gender* 114

- The Authoritarian Personality 114
- Social Dominance Orientation 116
- Openness to New Experience and Agreeableness 117
- Gender and Prejudice 117

*The Social Roots of Prejudice* 118

- Modern Racism 120
- Changing Social Norms 122

*The Cognitive Roots of Prejudice: From Categories to Stereotypes* 123

- Identification with the In-Group 125
- The Role of Language in Maintaining Bias 128
- The Confirmation Bias 132
- The Out-Group Homogeneity Bias 132
- The Difference between Prejudiced and Nonprejudiced Individuals 134

*The Consequences of Being a Target of Prejudice* 135

- Ways Prejudice Can Be Expressed 135
- Prejudice-Based Jokes 136
- Stereotype Threat 136
- Collective Threat 140
- Expecting to Be a Target of Prejudice 141

*Coping with Prejudice* 141

- Raising the Value of a Stigmatized Group 141
- Making In-Group Comparisons 142
- Anticipating and Confronting Prejudice 142
- Compensating for Prejudice 143

*Reducing Prejudice* 144

- Contact between Groups 144
- Personalizing Out-Group Members 146
- Reducing the Expression of Prejudice through Social Norms 146
- Reducing Prejudice through Training 147
- A Success Story: The Disarming of Racism in the U.S. Army 148

*The Mormon Experience Revisited* 149

*Chapter Review* 150

**5 Attitudes 155**

*What Are Attitudes?* 157

- Allport's Definition of Attitudes 157
- Attitude Structures 158
- Attitudes as an Expression of Values 159
- Explicit and Implicit Attitudes 160

*How Are Attitudes Measured?* 161

- The Attitude Survey 161
- Behavioral Measures 162
- Cognitive Measures: The Implicit Association Test (IAT) 163

*How Are Attitudes Formed?* 164

- Mere Exposure 164
- Direct Personal Experience 165
- Operant and Classical Conditioning 165
- Observational Learning 166
- The Effect of the Mass Media 167
- The Heritability Factor 169
- The Importance of Groups and Networks 170
- Social Networks 172

*Attitudes and Behavior* 172

- An Early Study of Attitudes and Behavior 173
- Theory of Planned Behavior 174
- The Importance of Conviction 175
- The Nonrational Actor 177

*Why We Don't Like Those Who Think Differently Than We Do: Naïve Realism and Attitudes* 179

*IDA Tarbell Revisited* 181

*Chapter Review* 181

**6 Persuasion and Attitude Change 185**

*The Yale Communication Model* 186

*The Persuasion Process* 186

- The Communicator 187
- The Message and the Audience 192

<i>The Cognitive Approach to Persuasion</i>	199
The Elaboration Likelihood Model	199
The Effect of Mood on Processing	201
The Effect of Personal Relevance on Processing	204
The Impact of Attitude Accessibility on Elaboration	205
Do Vivid Messages Persuade Better Than Nonvivid Messages?	206
Need for Cognition: Some Like to Do It the Hard Way	207
The Heuristic Model of Persuasion	208
<i>Cognitive Dissonance Theory: A Model of Self-Persuasion</i>	209
Cognitive Dissonance Theory	209
Alternatives to Cognitive Dissonance Theory	217
<i>Persuading the Masses through Propaganda</i>	220
Propaganda: A Definition	220
Characteristics of Propaganda	220
The Aims of Propaganda	221
Propaganda Techniques	222
Hitler's Rise to Power	223
<i>The Leopold and Loeb Case Revisited</i>	226
<i>Chapter Review</i>	226
<b>7 Conformity, Compliance, and Obedience</b>	<b>231</b>
<i>Conformity: Going Along with the Crowd</i>	233
Informational and Normative Social Influence	233
Social Norms: The Key to Conformity	234
Classic Studies in Conformity	235
How Does Social Influence Bring About Conformity?	238
Factors That Affect Conformity	239
<i>Minority Influence</i>	243
Can a Minority Influence the Majority?	244
Majority and Minority Influence: Two Processes or One?	245
<i>Compliance: Responding to a Direct Request</i>	247
Foot-in-the-Door Technique	247
Door-in-the-Face Technique	251
Compliance Techniques: Summing Up	253
<i>Obedience</i>	254
Defining Obedience	255
Destructive Obedience and the Social Psychology of Evil	256
Milgram's Experiments on Obedience	259
The Role of Gender in Obedience	264
Obedience or Aggression?	265
Obedience across Culture, Situation, and Time	266
Reevaluating Milgram's Findings	267
Critiques of Milgram's Research	267
<i>Disobedience</i>	269
Breaking with Authority	269
Reassessing the Legitimacy of the Authority	270
Strength in Numbers	271
<i>The Jury Room Revisited</i>	273
<i>Chapter Review</i>	274
<b>8 Group Processes</b>	<b>281</b>
<i>What Is a Group?</i>	282
Characteristics of Groups	283
What Holds a Group Together?	284
<i>How and Why Do Groups Form?</i>	284
Meeting Basic Needs	284
Roles in Groups	285
<i>How Do Groups Influence the Behavior of Individuals?</i>	286
The Effects of an Audience on Performance	286
<i>Group Performance: Conditions That Decrease or Increase Motivation of Group Members</i>	288
<i>Groups, Self-Identity, and Intergroup Relationships</i>	292
The Power of Groups to Punish: Social Ostracism	293
Deindividuation and Anonymity: The Power of Groups to Do Violence	295
<i>Group Performance</i>	296
Individual Decisions and Group Decisions	296
The Harder the Problem, the Better the Group	298
The Effect of Leadership Style on Group Decision Making	300
<i>Factors That Affect the Decision-Making Ability of a Group</i>	302
Group Composition	302
Group Size	304
Group Cohesiveness	304
<i>The Dynamics of Group Decision Making: Decision Rules, Group Polarization, and Groupthink</i>	305
Group Decisions: How Groups Blend Individual Choices	305
Group Polarization	306
Groupthink	307
<i>The Challenger Explosion Revisited</i>	309
<i>Chapter Review</i>	310
<b>9 Interpersonal Attraction and Close Relationships</b>	<b>315</b>
<i>The Roots of Interpersonal Attraction and Close Relationships</i>	317
Affiliation and Intimacy	317
<i>Loneliness and Social Anxiety</i>	318
Loneliness	318
Social Anxiety	319

***Love and Close Relationships 320***

Love's Triangle 320

Types of Love 322

The Formation of Intimate Relationships 324

***Determinants of Interpersonal Attraction 327***

Physical Proximity: Being in the Right Place 327

Similarity 329

Physical Attractiveness 330

***Dynamics of Close Relationships 338***

Relationship Development 339

Evaluating Relationships 340

Exchange Theories 340

Love over Time 343

Sculpting a Relationship 343

Responses to Conflict 345

Love in the Lab 347

Friendships 348

***Gertrude and Alice Revisited 350******Chapter Review 350*****10 *Interpersonal Aggression 357******What Is Aggression? 358***

Levels and Types of Aggression 358

Gender Differences in Aggression 360

Explanations for Aggression 361

***Biological Explanations for Aggression 361***

Ethology 362

Sociobiology 362

Genetics and Aggression 363

The Physiology of Aggression 364

Alcohol and Aggression 366

Physiology and Aggression: Summing Up 369

***The Frustration-Aggression Link 369***

Components of the Frustration-Aggression

Sequence 370

Factors Mediating the Frustration-Aggression Link 371

***The Social Learning Explanation for Aggression 373***

The Socialization of Aggression 374

Aggressive Scripts: Why and How They Develop 376

The Role of the Family in Developing Aggressive Behaviors 377

Child Abuse and Neglect 380

Family Disruption 380

The Role of Culture in Violent Behavior 381

The Role of Television in Teaching Aggression 385

Exposure to Violent Video Games 387

***Viewing Sexual Violence: The Impact on Aggression 388***

The Impact of Sexually Violent Material on Attitudes 389

Men Prone to Sexual Aggression: Psychological Characteristics 390

***Reducing Aggression 391***

Reducing Aggression in the Family 391

Reducing Aggression with Cognitive Intervention and Therapy 392

***The Beltway Sniper Case Revisited 393******Chapter Review 394*****11 *Prosocial Behavior and Altruism 401******Why Do People Help? 403***

Empathy: Helping in Order to Relieve Another's Suffering 403

Empathy and Egoism: Two Paths to Helping 404

Biological Explanations: Helping in Order to Preserve Our Own Genes 408

***Helping in Emergencies: A Five-Stage Decision Model 410***

Stage 1: Noticing the Situation 411

Stage 2: Labeling the Situation as an Emergency 412

Stage 3: Assuming Responsibility to Help: The Bystander Effect 413

Stage 4: Deciding How to Help 418

Stage 5: Implementing the Decision to Help 418

***Increasing the Chances of Receiving Help 426******Courageous Resistance and Heroism 426***

Explaining Courageous Resistance and Heroism: The Role of Personality 428

Righteous Rescuers in Nazi-Occupied Europe 429

A Synthesis: Situational and Personality Factors in Altruism 434

***Applying the Five-Stage Decision Model to Long-Term Helping 437***

Noticing the Situation 437

Labeling the Situation as an Emergency 438

Assuming Responsibility to Help 438

Deciding How to Help 438

Implementing the Decision to Help 438

***Altruistic Behavior from the Perspective of the Recipient 439***

Seeking Help from Others 439

Reacting to Help When It Is Given 441

***Irene Opdyke Revisited 444******Chapter Review 444*****Glossary G-1****References R-1****Name Index I-1****Subject Index I-11**

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# Preface

When we set out to write the first edition of *Social Psychology*, our goal was to provide teachers and students with a book that covered the important research and theoretical areas in social psychology in a concise fashion. In the second edition, we strayed a bit from that original goal but succeeded in writing a solid, research-based text for the introductory social psychology course. In this third edition, we have returned to our original goal and have streamlined the book, while maintaining its scientific integrity.

Social psychology has become a diverse field, and any attempt to present a totally comprehensive overview of all of its content area would be difficult to execute in a single volume or course. Instead, we take the approach of presenting students with information concerning three questions:

1. What is social psychology?
2. What do we know about social psychological phenomena?
3. How do we know what we know about social psychological phenomena?

This third edition of *Social Psychology* maintains the basic structure of the second edition: Eleven chapters cover the core topics in social psychology. By staying with the core organization and length, we believe that the entire book can be covered in one semester or quarter. Each chapter has been updated to include citations to new research and, where appropriate, new topics have been added.

The most obvious change in the third edition is the new publication format. The first and second editions were both “traditional” textbooks published the old-fashioned way. This third edition, however, is being published by an online publisher and is free to students. Yet, it retains the scientific, academic, and pedagogical integrity of the second edition.

Social psychology is important, interesting, relevant to the current world, and exciting. This is truly the golden age of social psychology, with many bright, energetic people doing so much interesting work. We hope to communicate to this generation of social psychology students the excitement that we felt as budding social psychologists when we first learned about Milgram’s obedience research or Darley and Latané’s bystander intervention research. Intrigued by the results of such studies, we began to wonder how they could be applied to real-life situations that confront each of us every day. In this edition, we communicate the excitement of the field so that students new to the area will be as intrigued with social psychological research and theory as we are.

Most social psychology texts approach the field from the perspective of research and theory, using examples from everyday life as illustrations of social psychological phenomena. This approach often leaves students without a full appreciation of the applications of social psychology. By applications, we mean

not only the usual applied social psychology topics that are interesting in their own right, but also the theory and research of social psychology that can be used to understand the complexities of cultural, historical, and current events. Social psychology can help us understand how we, as individuals, fit in with the wider social environment. Students will come away from this text with a sense that they are truly social creatures, subject to the influence of the social and physical environment.

## Changes to the Third Edition

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As noted earlier, the most drastic third-edition change is the method of publication and delivery. The chapters are now in PDF format, and as was the case in the second edition, are in simple black-and-white. However, we have retained the second edition's chapter organization, order, and structure. So instructors moving to the third edition from the second edition should find the transition seamless.

Some second-edition elements have been eliminated. For example, there are no photographs in the third edition. While photos may add to the appeal of the book, they have little educational value and significantly raise the book's cost. Also, the lists of suggested readings that ended each chapter in the second edition have been dropped. We felt that these were of little value to most students and that any students wishing to do follow-up reading would be guided by the citations/references in the chapters themselves. The Internet activities that were at the end of each chapter in the second edition have been removed from the book as well. These are now found in the student study guide that accompanies the third edition. Key pedagogical elements from the second edition, such as the chapter-opening vignettes, opening questions, running glossary, and focused chapter summaries, have been retained.

Some major changes to the existing chapters include the following:

Chapter 3, "Social Perception: Understanding Other People": The information from the second edition on optimism and dealing with life events has been updated and reorganized in a new section on positive psychology.

Chapter 4, "Prejudice and Discrimination": The core content of this chapter on prejudice has been retained. However, new material discusses how we must be careful about defining prejudice because popular and media concepts of the term differ from a scientific concept. Material has been added to the implicit stereotypes section on the "shooter paradigm," which is a way to measure the impact of subtle stereotypes on overt behavior. We have also added material on how "thinking different" can attenuate the impact of negative stereotypes. The section on personality correlates of prejudice has been updated to include information on right-wing authoritarianism, social dominance orientation, and the Big Five model. The section on stereotype threat has been updated with new research on this topic. We have added new sections on collective threat and on reducing prejudice, which addresses the impact of training on prejudice reduction.

Chapter 5, "Attitudes": New sections have been added on naïve realism and agenda setting. We have also included information on how exposure to violent video games relates to attitudes toward violence, and how groups and social networks relate to attitudes.

Chapter 6, "Persuasion and Attitude Change": A new section on the gender of the communicator has been added to the communicator section of the Yale communication model. The material on cognitive dissonance theory has been updated to include new research on topics such as postdecisional dissonance. The section on alternatives to cognitive dissonance theory has been expanded to include a subsection on the action-based

model. The persuading the masses discussion now includes a more-focused discussion of propaganda (its historical context, definition, characteristics, aims, and techniques).

Chapter 7, “Conformity, Compliance, and Obedience”: A new section on the social psychology of evil will help students understand this concept from a social psychological perspective (versus a religious or philosophical perspective). The section on the banality of evil has also been updated with new research.

Chapter 9, “Interpersonal Attraction and Close Relationships”: The section on loneliness has been updated to include research on the cultural aspects and health implications of loneliness. The material on Internet relationships has been expanded to include new topics and research. New information on forgiveness has been added to the section on responses to conflict in a relationship.

Chapter 10, “Interpersonal Aggression”: A new chapter-opening vignette focuses on the “Beltway Snipers.” The section on defining aggression has been expanded to include definitions of indirect aggression, direct aggression, and relational aggression. The discussions of gender and aggression, culture and aggression, and the effects of televised aggression have been updated with new research. New sections look at the relationship between genetics and aggression, the heat effect (including a discussion of the general affective aggression model), and the impact of violent video games.

Chapter 11, “Prosocial Behavior and Altruism”: A new chapter-opening vignette tells the story of Irene Gut Odyke, a young woman who helped rescue Jews from the Nazis. The section on assuming responsibility has been updated to include information on social category relationships and new research on the limits of the bystander effect. New discussions look at the role of gratitude in helping behavior, the courageous resistance and heroism that is linked to the research on those who rescued Jews from the Nazis, and the relationship between gender and rescue.

## Ancillaries

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An extensive, computerized test bank of examination questions is available. The questions in the test bank have been written by the authors and not by someone paid a small amount of money per question. We hope that these author-prepared questions will be an asset to the instructor.

As was the case with the second edition, the hard-copy student study guide has been replaced with a free online study guide. Students can download materials for each chapter, print them out, and use them as they wish. The online study guide features chapter outlines, key questions, practice questions, and Internet activities.

## Acknowledgments

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A project of this scope requires much hard work and the support of many people. First and foremost, we would like to thank our wives Ricky Karen Bordens and Kay F. Schaffer, who provided much-needed love and support while we toiled on this book.

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