Introduction to Social Psychology

Richard A. Lippa

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Social psychology is an engaging yet difficult field to survey in an introductory text. Its central topics — social perception, attitudes and attitude change, attraction, aggression, prosocial behavior, influence, and group behavior — are highly relevant to everyday life and of great interest to students. At the same time, social psychology embraces a sometimes bewildering collection of topics, theories, and informationally dense empirical studies. The challenge facing a survey text is to maintain the intrinsic interest of the material while providing complete coverage of a complex field. Such a text must be well-organized, cohesive, comprehensive, clear, and engrossing. Does this text meet the challenge? I invite you to read a chapter and be the judge. In the process you will encounter the following features that serve to organize the book's content, to capture and maintain the reader's interest, and most important, to teach social psychology.

Integrative Themes and Emphases

Each chapter, and indeed the entire book, begins with a conceptual overview that "tills the soil" and prepares the student for what is to follow.

Levels of explanation. To locate social-psychological explanations within the broader context of scientific understanding, Chapter 1 discusses levels of explanation that can be applied to social behavior and illustrates them with a conceptual diagram. For example, Chapter 1 notes that aggression can be explained in terms of group-level explanations (biological groups, cultural groups), individual-level explanations (the individual's unique physiology, past environment, and current setting), and internal mediating variables (attitudes, traits, emotions). The notion of different levels of explanation is used repeatedly in subsequent chapters to remind students of the "big picture" and underscore the complexity of social behavior. The levels-

Preface

of-explanation diagram serves to organize and summarize research on prejudice (Chapter 9), attraction (Chapter 11), aggression (Chapter 12), and prosocial behavior (Chapter 13).

Historical context. This text continually links social psychological research to the history of the field and to the history of the world at large. In the pursuit of up-to-date citations, recent texts have too often jettisoned important older research. This book contains a good mix of both classic and contemporary studies. When appropriate, I describe the historical development of a research topic so that the reader understands why social psychologists study certain topics and how research evolves. Thus, for example, I discuss in some detail the vicissitudes of research on the accuracy of person perception (Chapter 3), classic and contemporary work on the functions of attitudes (Chapter 7), research on the authoritarian personality (Chapter 9), Sherif's classic contributions to conformity research (Chapter 14), and early work on dimensions of group behavior and styles of leadership (Chapter 15).

Complete treatment of theory and methodological issues. Chapter 1 provides a brief account of four major theoretical perspectives in social psychology and prepares the student for more detailed accounts in later chapters. Both Chapters 1 and 2 discuss the role of theory in social psychological research. Chapter 2 includes a number of topics not typically found in introductory-level chapters on research methods: meta-analysis, internal and external validity in experiments, quasi-experimental designs, and a nontechnical discussion of the "statistical significance" of research findings.

Methodological issues introduced in Chapter 2 reappear in later chapters. For example, Chapter 6 (Personality and the Self) and Chapter 7 (Attitudes and Beliefs)

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elaborate on the concepts of reliability and validity. Later chapters reinforce the distinction between correlational and experimental studies with substantive research examples. Chapter 10 (Gender and Social Behavior) includes a readable presentation of the meta-analytic techniques used in research on sex differences.

Integration of applied social psychology. Students want to know how social psychological theories and research apply to real life. Fortunately, much theory and research in social psychology addresses applied topics, and each chapter of this text presents varied applied content. Because applied social psychology is woven into all chapters, this text solves a pedagogical problem faced by many instructors of social psychology: applied topics are frequently slighted because they are tacked on as the final chapters of most texts and thus taught (or simply not taught) during the rushed final days of the academic semester or quarter.

The applied social psychology in each chapter of this text takes two forms. First, each chapter provides real-life examples that illustrate social psychological theories and principles. For example, Chapter 3 applies research on first impressions to the impressions formed by lawyers and jurors in the courtroom. Chapter 5 illustrates illusory correlations with examples of errors in clinical judgment. Chapter 8 links research on attitude change to commercial advertising.

The second form: Research frequently attempts to answer pressing social questions (Does TV violence contribute to aggression?) or to find ways of ameliorating social problems (Do cooperative integrated classrooms reduce prejudice?). Each chapter includes a section that addresses such applied topics. Chapter 3 (Person Perception) concludes, for example, with a discussion of detecting deception in real-life settings, Chapter 4 (Attribution) with a description of "attributional retraining" therapies for depression and test anxiety, and Chapter 12 (Aggression) with a discussion of ways to reduce aggression.

The treatment of applied topics culminates in Chapter 16 (Applying Social Psychology). Because applied social psychology is an integral part of all chapters, this final chapter focuses on one particular applied domain—health psychology—and describes three ways of applying social psychology to it: answering social questions, evaluating social programs, and designing social interventions. Thus Chapter 16 describes the *process* of applying social psychology to one substantive research area instead of reviewing a motley collection of applied topics. While learning about the process, the reader learns much about social psychological factors in health as well.

Facilitating Understanding: Pedagogical Aids

A consistent and coherent program of pedagogy is employed throughout the text. In addition to such usual features as itemized chapter summaries and complete chapter glossaries, the text includes a number of noteworthy and innovative pedagogical aids.

Examples that open and organize chapters. Each chapter begins with a quotation that captures the reader's attention. For example, Chapter 11 (Liking, Loving, and Close Relationships) opens with a passage from *Anna Karenina* on the nature of romantic love. Other passages from *Anna Karenina* appear throughout the chapter and serve to sustain the narrative flow.

Sources quoted in other chapters include the *Man of La Mancha* (Chapter 4), Hermann Hesse's *Steppenwolf* (Chapter 6), Adolf Hitler's *Mein Kampf* (Chapter 7),

William Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar* (Chapter 8), Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eye* (Chapter 9), Ursula K. LeGuin's *The Left Hand of Darkness* (Chapter 10), William Golding's *Lord of the Flies* (Chapter 12), Fyodor Dostoevsky's *The Brothers Karamazov* (Chapter 13), and George Orwell's *1984* (Chapter 14). These excerpts are brilliant, for they are written by brilliant people. (The one exception is the material from *Mein Kampf*, which, if not brilliant, is morbidly fascinating.) Do these excerpts work? Again, I invite you to read a chapter. I think they serve extremely well to illustrate social psychological concepts.

Summary tables. All chapters contain summary tables that gather research findings and present students with a grand overview of a particular research area. These summary tables serve several pedagogical functions. They reiterate important terms and concepts, organize material conceptually, and serve as convenient study aids. They also serve to familiarize students with the numerous technical terms used by social psychologists. For example, the summary table for Chapter 4 reinforces students' understanding of various concepts in attribution theory: correspondent inferences, Kelley's cube model, the discounting principle, the fundamental attribution error, the actor-observer effect, self-handicapping strategies, and so on.

Figures, tables, and graphs. The figures and tables in this text are more than window dressing; they are valuable learning aids. Each chapter contains a number of conceptual diagrams as well as the usual graphs and tables of experimental results. For example, the conceptual diagrams in Chapter 2 (Social Psychological Research) provide clear illustrations of correlational and experimental studies and highlight what each kind of study can tell us about cause-effect relationships. Chapter 2 also presents a thorough graphic depiction of correlations and correlation coefficients — concepts that are often incompletely understood by students.

Because many students have difficulty extracting appropriate information from tables and graphs, the figures in this book have been carefully designed to stimulate critical thinking and lead students to meaningful conclusions. The typical figure begins by posing a question. The remainder of the figure recapitulates the general research procedure used to answer the question, presents results, and often concludes with a comment that elaborates on the research findings or hypotheses. Students are thereby encouraged to think about research findings repeatedly and creatively.

Photo essays. Four varied, dramatic photo essays grace this text. In keeping with the overall philosophy of the book, the essays are linked to important recurring themes. The first illustrates the concept of levels of explanation discussed in Chapter 1 and used throughout the text to organize research findings. The second shows the many faces of applied social psychology. The third illustrates the variety of social influences that occur through the life cycle. The last essay ties social psychological research to broader cultural and moral concerns by discussing the "good and evil" of social behavior. Each essay was carefully developed to complement material in the text.

Boxed material. Chapters contain boxes that elaborate on important research topics (such as the Schachter-Singer theory of emotion, box 1 of Chapter 4), examine specific applied domains (predicting and treating family violence, box 2 of Chapter

11), or take stock of a research area (the legacy of the Yale research on persuasion, box 1 of Chapter 8). Unlike the boxed material in most texts, these are not intended to be asides; they are part of the ongoing narrative flow.

Supplementary materials. The text is accompanied by an Instructor's Manual prepared by Gloria Cowan, a Study Guide prepared by Gary S. Nickell, a 1,100-item test bank, and color transparencies. In writing the test items, I have striven to provide a balanced pool of both conceptual and informational questions. These items are based on years of experience teaching social psychology to thousands of students.

Acknowledgments

Writing a textbook is a bit like having a baby—painful at the time but rewarding in retrospect. Now that the labor is over and I have had some time to examine the final product, I can say without embarrassment that I am proud of my offspring. Of course, like all babies, this one had more than one parent.

When I began working on *Introduction to Social Psychology* I had little conception of how much the writing of a comprehensive textbook is a team effort. Despite my naïveté, I was blessed with one of the best teams in the business.

Psychology Editor Ken King kept the project on target. Senior Development Editor Mary Arbogast read my manuscript with an astonishing attention to detail. Her clarity of thought and expression shows throughout the book. John Bergez assisted in the development of the many figures and tables with unfailing creativity. In the process, he offered many useful suggestions about the text and photography program.

Andrew Ogus supervised the design, art, and photography programs and Stephen Forsling served as photo researcher. Together, I think we have created a book that is visually pleasing and exciting. Michael Oates launched my book into production with a firm hand, and Donna Linden brought the book to safe harbor. Thanks to each of them.

The quality of any text depends on the quality of its reviewers. Mine generously shared their critical acumen and expert knowledge. I have given my reviewers what I consider the ultimate compliment—incorporating their ideas and suggestions into the text. To each of the following reviewers, thanks: Donald M. Amoroso, University of Waterloo; Nancy Brekke, University of Virginia; Jerry M. Burger, Santa Clara University; Gloria Cowan, California State University, San Bernardino; Robert T. Croyle, University of Utah; Frederick Gibbons, Iowa State University; Ralph Juhnke, Claremont McKenna College; Eric Knowles, University of Arkansas; Mark R. Leary, Wake Forest University; Diane M. Mackie, University of California, Santa Barbara; Paul R. Nail, Southwestern Oklahoma State University; Paul B. Paulus, University of Texas at Arlington; R. E. Petty, Ohio State University; Fred Rodewalt, University of Utah; Steve Slane, Cleveland State University; Robin R. Vallacher, Florida Atlantic University; Russell Veitch, Bowling Green State University; Linda A. Wood, University of Guelph.

Ann Litvin read original drafts of most chapters and provided the much-needed perspective of an intelligent lay person.

For their exceptional secretarial skills, I wish to thank my two personal computers. They accepted without protest the crudest prose and the most uninspired first drafts.

Finally, I must acknowledge my two dogs, Seymour (a dachshund) and Puccini (a collie). As I spent interminable hours before my computer working on this book, Seymour would often sleep curled on my lap and Puccini would lie near my feet with his nose resting on the books and articles inevitably scattered over the floor. These two were wise enough not to let a social psychology text interfere with the simpler pleasures of life.

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Brief Contents

CHAPTER 1	What Is Social Psychology?	3
CHAPTER 2	Social Psychological Research	23
CHAPTER 3	Person Perception	61
CHAPTER 4	Attribution	97
CHAPTER 5	Social Cognition	133
CHAPTER 6	Personality and the Self	171
CHAPTER 7	Attitudes and Beliefs	219
CHAPTER 8	Persuasion and Attitude Change	257
CHAPTER 9	Prejudice	301
CHAPTER 10	Gender and Social Behavior	343
CHAPTER 11	Liking, Loving, and Close Relationships	387
CHAPTER 12	Aggression	433
CHAPTER 13	Altruism and Prosocial Behavior	477
CHAPTER 14	Conformity, Compliance, and Obedience	521
CHAPTER 15	Group Behavior	567
CHAPTER 16	Applying Social Psychology	613

Detailed Contents

List of Applied Topics xv

Preface xviii

CHAPTER 1

What Is Social Psychology? 3

The Nature of Social Psychology 6

Social Psychology Studies Influence on Social Behavior ■ *Social Psychology Explains Social Behavior* ■ *Social Psychology Studies* Social *Behavior* ■ *The Self in Social Psychology* ■ *Differences Between Social Psychology and Related Fields*

Theories in Social Psychology 11

The Functions of Social Psychological Theories ■ *Four Theoretical Perspectives*

Applying Social Psychology 17

The Two Faces of Applied Social Psychology ■ *The Profession of Social Psychology*

Summary 20

Glossary 20

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CHAPTER 2

Social Psychological Research 23

Issues in Social Psychological Research 25

Theories in Social Psychology ■ Operational Definitions in Social Psychology ■ Reliability and Validity of Measures ■ Kinds of Social Psychological Studies ■ Generalizing from the Results of Research Studies ■ Statistics and Social Psychology Research ■ Bias in Social Psychological Research

Ethics in Social Psychological Research 49

Ethical Problems ■ Measures to Reduce Ethical Problems—APA Guidelines

The Social Relevance of Social Psychological Research 55

Summary 56

Glossary 57

CHAPTER 3

Person Perception 61

The Nature of Person Perception ■ Differences Between Person Perception and Object Perception ■ Research Topics in Person Perception

First Impressions 65

Physical Characteristics ■ Nonverbal Behaviors ■ The Power of First Impressions

Accuracy of Direct Judgments 73

Judging Personality ■ Judging Emotions ■ Detecting Deception

Direct Judgments: A Postscript 93

Summary 93

Glossary 94

CHAPTER 4

Attribution 97

Attribution Processes: Internal and External Causes 98

Our Preference for Internal Explanations

Theories of Attribution 103

Jones and Davis's Theory of Correspondent Inferences ■ Kelley's Cube Model of Attribution ■ Causal Schemas

Attribution Errors and Biases 116

The Fundamental Attribution Error ▪ The Actor-Observer Effect ▪ Salience Effects in Attribution ▪ Motivational Biases in Attribution

Applying Attribution Theory 126

Treating Depression ▪ Improving Academic Performance

Summary 129

Glossary 130

CHAPTER 5

Social Cognition 133

Putting Information Together: Impression Formation 134

Asch's Gestalt Model ▪ Anderson's Weighted Averaging Model

Schemas and Social Perception 139

The Nature of Schemas ▪ Kinds of Schemas in Social Cognition ▪ Effects of Schemas on Social Cognition ▪ The Persistence of Schemas ▪ Illusory Correlations in Social Perception

Social Inference and Decision Making 156

The Effects of Sampling Errors on Inferences ▪ The Underutilization of Baserate Information ▪ Heuristics — Shortcuts to Social Inference ▪ Framing Effects in Decision Making

Social Cognition: A Final Thought 166

Summary 167

Glossary 168

CHAPTER 6

Personality and the Self 171

Personality and Social Behavior 172

Trait Theories: Personality as Stable Internal Dispositions ▪ Social Learning Theories: Personality as Learned Behavior ▪ Research on Personality Theories

The Self 189

Classic Views of the Self ▪ Self-Knowledge — Research on the "Me" ▪ Self-Awareness Theory ▪ Public and Private Selves ▪ The Self and Mental Health

Summary 213

Glossary 216

CHAPTER 7

Attitudes and Beliefs 219

What Are Attitudes? 220

Characteristics of Attitudes ■ A Functional Approach to Attitudes ■ Attitude Measurement

Attitude Formation 229

Learning Theories of Attitude Formation ■ Personality and Attitude Formation ■ Logical Inference Theories

Attitudes and Behavior 243

Difficulties in Predicting Behavior from Attitudes ■ Fishbein and Ajzen's Theory of Reasoned Action

Beliefs and Attitudes: A Final Comment 251

Summary 252

Glossary 254

CHAPTER 8

Persuasion and Attitude Change 257

A Communication Model of Persuasion: The Yale Research 257

Communicator Variables ■ Message Variables ■ Channel Variables ■ Target or Audience Variables ■ Interactions Among Persuasion Variables

Dissonance Theory and Research 269

Festinger's Theory of Cognitive Dissonance ■ The Festinger and Carlsmith (1959) Study ■ The Psychology of Insufficient Justification ■ Variations on a Dissonance Theme ■ Qualifications on Dissonance Theory ■ Self-Perception Theory: An Alternate Explanation ■ Evaluating Dissonance Theory and Self-Perception Theory

Cognitive Responses and Attitude Change 288

Forewarning Effects ■ Attitudes as Schemas

The Elaboration Likelihood Model of Persuasion 293

Summary 297

Glossary 299

CHAPTER 9

Prejudice 301

What is Prejudice? 302

Analyzing Prejudice

Stereotypes 307

Measuring Stereotypes ▪ *The Formation of Stereotypes* ▪ *Consequences of Stereotypes*

Social Causes of Prejudice 318

The Authoritarian Personality ▪ *Social Ideologies and Prejudice* ▪ *Social Groups and Prejudice* ▪ *Intergroup Competition and Prejudice*

Reducing Prejudice: The Intergroup Contact Hypothesis 331

Contact Between Groups in Schools ▪ *The Effect of Contact on Intergroup Attitudes* ▪ *Residential Contact* ▪ *Vicarious Contact Through the Mass Media*

Summary 339

Glossary 341

CHAPTER 10

Gender and Social Behavior 343

The Changing Roles of Women and Men 343

Psychological Research on Sex and Gender 347

Stereotypes About Women and Men 347

Personality Stereotypes ▪ *Broader Stereotypes About Gender* ▪ *Gender and the Perception of Ability*

Sex Differences 354

The Study of Sex Differences ▪ *The Meaning of Sex Differences*

Theories of Gender and Sex-Typing 363

Biological Theories ▪ *Freudian Theory* ▪ *Social Learning Theories* ▪ *Cognitive Approaches to Gender* ▪ *Social Role Theory* ▪ *Self-Presentation Theory of Gender*

Masculinity, Femininity, and Androgyny 378

Masculinity and Femininity as Separate Dimensions ▪ *Beyond Masculinity, Femininity, and Androgyny*

A Final Comment on Gender 382

Summary 383

Glossary 384

CHAPTER 11

Liking, Loving, and Close Relationships 387

Trends in the Scientific Study of Attraction 388

The Beginnings of Attraction 389

Affiliation and Anxiety: The "Dr. Zilstein Experiment" ▪ *From Affiliation to Attraction*

Theories of Attraction 401

Learning Theories ▪ *Exchange and Equity Theories* ▪ *Cognitive Consistency Theories*

Love 407

The Sociobiological Perspective ▪ *The History of Love in Western Culture* ▪ *The Social Psychology of Love* ▪ *How Do You Know You're in Love?*

The Life Cycle of Close Relationships 421

Initial Attraction and Beginnings ▪ *Building a Relationship* ▪ *Continuation and Consolidation* ▪ *Deterioration and Decline* ▪ *Endings*

Summary 428

Glossary 430

CHAPTER 12

Aggression 433

Defining Aggression ▪ *Measuring Aggression*

Factors that Influence Human Aggression 437

Biological Groups, Instincts, and Aggression ▪ *Cultural Influences on Aggression* ▪ *Individual Differences in Aggression* ▪ *The Environment, Internal Psychological Processes, and Aggression* ▪ *Social Learning and Aggression*

Reducing Aggression 464

Catharsis ▪ *Punishing Aggression* ▪ *Creating Responses Incompatible with Aggression* ▪ *Providing Social Restraints* ▪ *Cognitive Strategies for Controlling Aggression* ▪ *A Concluding Word on Controlling Aggression*

Summary 474

Glossary 475

CHAPTER 13

Altruism and Prosocial Behavior 477

Defining and Measuring Prosocial Behavior 478

Major Approaches to the Study of Prosocial Behavior 480

Sociobiological Theory and Prosocial Behavior ▪ Cultural Norms of Prosocial Behavior

The Psychology of Prosocial Behavior 487

Is There a Prosocial Personality? ▪ The Psychology of Emergency Intervention ▪ Guilt, Moods, and Helping

Helping People to Help 513

Exhortation ▪ Modeling ▪ Assuming Responsibility ▪ Humanizing the Victim Who Needs Help ▪ Education About Helping

Summary 517

Glossary 519

CHAPTER 14

Conformity, Compliance, and Obedience 521

Kinds of Social Influence ▪ Levels of Social Influence

Conformity 524

Research on Conformity ▪ Factors That Influence Conformity

Compliance 545

Positive Moods and Compliance ▪ Reciprocity and Compliance ▪ Commitment and Compliance ▪ Psychological Reactance and Compliance

Obedience 552

The Nature of Obedience ▪ The Milgram Studies in Perspective ▪ Obedience Studies Since Milgram's

Summary 562

Glossary 564

CHAPTER 15

Group Behavior 567

What Is a Group? 568

Studying Group Behavior 569

Dimensions of Group Behavior

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