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fourth edition

# **Social Psychology**

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**Social  
Psychology**

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Full reference material may be found in the References at the end of the book.

# Preface

In the years since the last edition of this book was written, there have been some substantial changes in the field. Most of these changes are the result of typical cycles in a science in which certain topics capture the attention of people while other topics become temporarily of less interest to those working in the field. In social psychology it seems fair to say that some of the traditional areas such as group dynamics, leadership, affiliation and attitude change, though still of great importance, have received relatively little attention recently. In contrast, other traditional areas such as liking and attraction, aggression, and social perception have shown a resurgence. At the same time, interest has continued high in altruism and compliance and has grown enormously in attribution theory, environmental psychology, and sex roles. None of these shifts of interest mean that a particular topic is less important than it used to be, nor that some new topic is suddenly more important than it was. But there is no denying that in any given period of years, there is more research and progress on certain issues than on others.

In this edition we have increased coverage of those areas that are receiving more attention in the journals, and have reduced somewhat the amount of space devoted to traditional areas in which research is less active. In particular, we have added a new chapter on sex roles. This fascinating topic cuts across several fields of psychology including not only social, but also developmental and personality. Our chapter emphasizes the social aspects of sex roles but draws on work in other areas as well. To reflect the continuing and growing interest in social cognition, we have

expanded coverage of attribution theory, social perception, and social cognition in general. In addition, liking, aggression, altruism, and environment are given more space than before, because there is a great deal of new research to discuss. Throughout the book we have added more material on the sociobiological approach to social behavior. Although this viewpoint has not yet had a major impact in most areas of social psychology, it has generated a considerable amount of discussion and is valuable mainly because it gives a new perspective on some traditional problems.

The major reduction in coverage is in the area of attitudes and attitude change, to which we devote one fewer chapter than in the previous edition. However, we feel strongly that just because issues are not receiving a lot of attention right now is not sufficient reason for reducing coverage substantially. The classic work on attitudes and group dynamics, for example, is still enormously valuable. There is no question that it is part of that body of knowledge to which all students in social psychology should be exposed. Therefore, while expanding coverage of the new areas in response to trends in the field, we have not short-changed the traditional areas. In some instances we have compressed the material somewhat, but generally we have maintained full coverage.

A revision of a textbook consists in part of bringing it up to date by including research that has been conducted since the previous edition. Of course we have done this, and there are a great many references to very recent work. On the other hand, we have not dropped classic references just because new ones were available, nor added new ones just so we could boast about the number of recent citations. This text is not an encyclopedia of studies in social psychology, nor is it a list of the table of contents of recent journals. The point of the text is to present what we know in the field as clearly and comprehensively as possible, to discuss unresolved issues where appropriate, and to explain the findings using the best theories that are available. Through all of this, however, we have tried to keep in mind that this is a book for introductory students in social psychology. They do not want and do not benefit from long lists of references, from descriptions of ten studies to make a single point when one or two would suffice, nor from a presentation of every possible explanation of the same finding. We have tried to make the information in social psychology easy and accessible while at the same time making it interesting and relevant to the students' lives.

As before, we have tried to simplify without oversimplifying. The concepts and knowledge of social psychology should be within the reach of all college students and we have tried to accomplish this. On the other hand, this is by no means a simple text in the sense of being "low-level." In our opinion, it contains the material that students at any level, any kind of school should know about the field; and it presents the material in such a way that any student should be able to understand it while the best students should still be challenged by it. This is the material we teach in

our classes at Columbia, UCLA, and Stanford and also the material we would teach anywhere else. Indeed, we recommend the book to graduate students for a thorough review of the field. Thus, it is comprehensive and rigorous but, we hope, easy to read and interesting.

The material for this book is drawn from a wide variety of sources. Rather than limiting ourselves to laboratory experiments conducted by social psychologists, we included many different kinds of research done by people in many different disciplines. Indeed, we tried to use any source that seemed appropriate and scientifically rigorous. In addition to laboratory experiments, we relied on findings from field experiments, correlational field experiments, surveys, observational work, and archive data. This research was conducted by social psychologists, of course, but also other psychologists, sociologists, anthropologists, ethologists, political scientists, and biologists. It is all grist for the mill, all knowledge about social behavior as long as the work itself is done well.

In preparing this edition we received help from many people. Our special thanks to Shelley Taylor who worked with us on the social perception and attribution chapters, and to Anne Peplau who worked on the sex roles chapter. We feel that these three chapters are immeasurably better because of the advice and guidance we received from these two outstanding psychologists. At Prentice-Hall, John Isley the psychology editor, got reviews of the work, discussed the plans for revision, and generally supervised work on this edition. Joyce Turner, production editor, took charge of all the details of turning the manuscript into a finished book, and did a fine job on this. And Robert Mony did an exceptional job of copyediting, one of the best we have ever seen. We are grateful to all of these people.

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Finally, let us repeat and enlarge somewhat on a note from the previous edition. When it was published, there was a great deal of turmoil in the field of social psychology. Many people seemed concerned about a lack of progress in the field, about the direction it was taking, and about the general issue of whether it was appropriate to do research on social issues. Although many of these concerns still exist, it seems to us that morale among social psychologists is higher than it was and that there are fewer complaints about what is being accomplished. In response to some of the earlier concerns, there has been a shift to more applied research and perhaps more attention to important issues. Progress is always going

to be slow in a discipline that deals with as complex matters as social behavior, but we feel confident that the decade of the eighties will be even more productive than the 70s and that the field is going to go through a period of increased vigor and growth.



# **Social Psychology**

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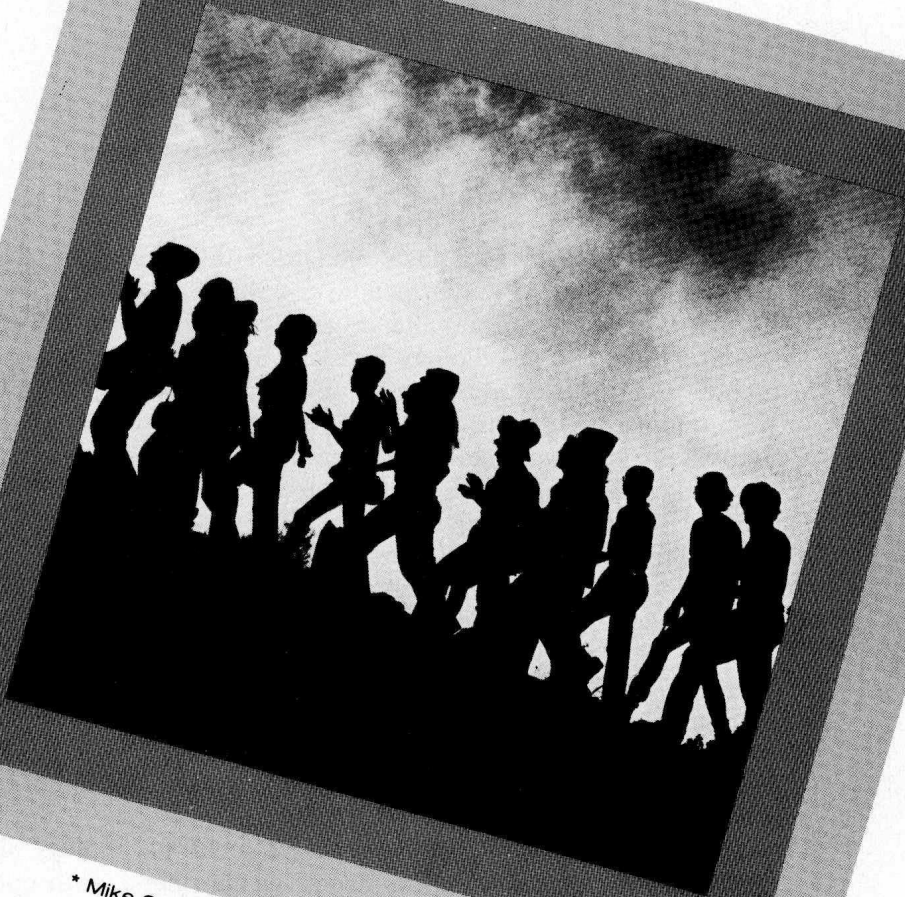
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# Introduction and Theories



\* Mike Goldberg; Stock, Boston.

## Introduction and Theories

THEORIES IN SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY

GENETIC-PHYSIOLOGICAL THEORIES

LEARNING THEORIES AND BEHAVIORISM

PERCEPTUAL-COGNITIVE THEORIES

INCENTIVE-CONFLICT THEORIES

SUMMARY

SUGGESTIONS FOR ADDITIONAL READING

Social psychology is the systematic study of social behavior. It deals with how we perceive other people and social situations, how we respond to others and they to us, and in general how we are affected by social situations. Social psychology includes all areas of interactions between people such as affiliation, attraction and liking, aggression, conformity, communication, altruism, and influence of various kinds. It is concerned with how groups affect their members and how groups act as units. Recently, two problems have attracted considerable interest. One is how sex roles develop and how they affect people; the other is how the environment—including such factors as noise, architectural design, heat, and crowding—affects us. In addition, a great deal of research has focussed on the principles and rules by which people interpret the social world, perceive others, and try to make sense of what is happening around them. Social psychology tries to answer any and all questions about how people affect one another and how they behave in social situations. Not all of these questions have been answered fully—far from it—but the job of social psychologists is to ask the important questions and then to look for answers.

Of course, many fields other than social psychology also deal with these problems. Sociologists, urban geographers, anthropologists, and members of various disciplines of psychology are concerned with social behavior and social problems. Much of their research overlaps. Sometimes it is almost identical; sometimes it is quite different. But in order to understand certain complex issues, we need research from many points of view, using a wide range of techniques and approaches.

In order to get some sense of how different disciplines and subdisciplines approach social behavior, let us consider one example and discuss briefly the kind of research that has been done in the various fields. One of the most serious problems facing the country today is the extremely high crime rate. Over the past twenty years, the rate of violent crime has risen sharply. This increase has been most dramatic in urban areas, but suburbs and small towns have also seen greatly increased crime. Researchers have spent a great deal of time and energy trying to explain criminal behavior, and in particular, to understand its recent sharp rise. The approaches to this question differ greatly from field to field.

One approach, typical of sociologists, economists, and to some extent urban specialists, is to look for broad social explanations. The economist points out that crime is closely related to income level. Poor people commit many more crimes than more affluent people. And, according to some views, they do so simply because they need money and commit crimes to get it. Some of these crimes involve violence, some do not; but they are all motivated by economic need. To support this position, a sociologist or economist might note that murder (usually a noneconomic crime) is much less related to income level than car theft or robbery. So, the explanation of criminal behavior in general, and the increase in crime rate in particular, is that people are experiencing greater economic need than they used to, or that relative to others, they are worse off than they were.

Sociologists and demographers (those who study population trends and patterns) have related crime rate to social factors such as race, population density, and especially age. It is well established that violent crime against strangers is committed mainly by young people. (Many acts of violence occur between family members—child-, wife-, and even husband-beating, spouses killing each other, and so on; these are not especially crimes of the young. However, violent crime has risen most sharply in situations outside the family.) Since the percentage of the population aged fourteen to twenty-five has increased dramatically over the past twenty years, the rise in crime rate could be due entirely to the age shift in the population. There are more people in the age group that commits violent crimes, so there is more violent crime.

These explanations are made at the broad, general societal level; they do not discuss individual psychological mechanisms. Surely economic factors are a major reason why people commit crimes, and surely young people tend to commit most of the violent crimes. Improve the economic conditions of the poor and crimes will be reduced; wait until the baby boom generation grows up, and the crime rate will drop. Most sociologists would add factors such as racial tensions, immigrant problems, peer group effects, urban structure, and so on; but the level of explanation is still broad and general.

Psychologists deal with the problem of rising crime quite differently. They ask two additional questions: First, they want to know why some people commit crimes when others, in seemingly identical social situa-