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Social Psychology for Whom?

Ellen Berscheid and Elaine H. Walster

Interpersonal Attraction. Reading, Mass.: Addison-Wesley, 1969. Pp. xii + 129. $1.95 paper.

James H. Davis

Group Performance. Reading, Mass.: Addison-Wesley, 1969. Pp. x + 115. $1.95 paper.

Kenneth J. Gergen

The Psychology of Behavior Exchange. Reading, Mass.: Addison-Wesley, 1969. Pp. xi + 109. $1.95 paper.

Charles A. Kiesler and Sara B. Kiesler

Conformity. Reading, Mass.: Addison-Wesley, 1969. Pp. xi + 109. $1.95 paper.

Karl E. Weick

The Social Psychology of Organizing. Reading, Mass.: Addison-Wesley, 1969. Pp. vi + 121. $1.95 paper.

Philip Zimbardo and Ebbe E. Ebbesen

Influencing Attitudes and Changing Behavior: A Basic Introduction to Relevant Methodology, Theory, and Applications. Reading, Mass.: Addison-Wesley, 1969. Pp. ix + 148. $1.95 paper.

Reviewed by JOEL W. GOLDSTEIN

These books are all in the Topics in Social Psychology Series, *edited by Charles A. Kiesler, collaborator in one of the volumes, who is identified below.*

Ellen Berscheid, the first author of the first book, is Associate Professor of Psychology at the University of Minnesota. The coauthor, Elaine Hatfield Walster, is Professor of Sociology at the University of Wisconsin. James H. Davis, who wrote the second book, is Associate Professor of Psychology at the University of Illinois. The third book was written by Kenneth J. Gergen, Associate Professor and Chairman of the Psychology and Education Department, Swarthmore. Charles A. Kiesler and Sara B. Kiesler, who collaborated to write the fourth book, are at the University of Kansas, where he is Chairman of the Department of Psychology and she is Associate Professor of Psychology and Speech. Karl E. Weick is Professor of Psychology at the University of Minnesota, and the last book was written by Philip Zimbardo, Professor of Psychology at Stanford, with Ebbe E. Ebbesen, fourth-year graduate student there.

The reviewer, Joel W. Goldstein, is Assistant Professor of Psychology and Industrial Administration, Carnegie-Mellon University. A University of Kansas PhD, his research currently is a major study of the social psychology of drug usage.

WHAT should be considered in the undergraduate social psychology course? Clearly the variance of subject matter is increasing; in 1954, a handbook of social psychology consisted of two volumes. Today the same editor and publisher see five as necessary to do the job. Now we have the first paperback series designed to serve, through some combination of its parts, as a text for this popular course. This one is designed to offer depth of treatment rather than an encyclopedic overview.

Under the editorship of Charles A. Kiesler, the six titles listed have already appeared; works on prejudice, person perception, and intergroup conflict are in preparation. The editor's Foreword indicates that this series is offered because the growth of social psychology has created a condition where "no one can any longer be an expert in all of social psychology. . . . Taken as a whole, the series adequately covers the field, but it has the advantage that each short book was written by an expert in the area." Instructors will probably select some subset of the titles as their text, and the books will also find usage as supplementary reading in courses, from introductory ones to graduate seminars.

Can even a series of titles be all things to all students and instructors? Clearly not. What then does this series do best? In general (the exceptions will be noted) we have a 'science-' rather than a 'life-' oriented collection here, and one, while varying considerably in difficulty level, best suited to the student seriously interested in social psychology as the systematic investigation of the nature of human social behavior. Some will readily assert that this is what the undergraduate social psychology course should be, while others—if I interpret the *Zeitgeist* correctly—will demur. These others will point out that most students have no professional interest in social psychology (even after completing the course) and that presenting the field to them as conceptualized by the researcher is a disservice. In this view social psychology courses should bridge the gap between analytical conceptual-

izations of social behavior and views of such behavior in the world.

In past texts, the 'science' position has predominated. While application to the world was rarely omitted, it clearly played a secondary role. Only Watson's 1966 text, *Social Psychology: Issues and Insights*, made a systematic attempt at gap-bridging. This series does little, in four of the six titles now available, to change this situation. It is largely up to the student and the instructor to apply basic conceptualizations if this is to be done. It would be interesting to have a survey of the books being used nationally analyzed by type of institution to gain some clues to the approaches being taken on this issue. I suspect that nontext materials are often being added to bring more of the world into the classroom.

Unfortunately, only Zimbardo and Ebbesen, and Weick take the trouble to specify their intents. With the others we must infer it, and this may be significant, for with these other titles the impersonal and 'pure' style of the exposition leads one to conclude that it is not so much the novice learner as it is the fledgling professional whom is being addressed. Student learning aids, such as summaries, are sparse or nonexistent; there are no study questions and no indices. Often one is left with a neatly packaged set of 'findings' without clues as to where they came from or where they lead.

Given that this is a science-oriented series, it is a disappointment to see so little of the *process* of social psychological investigation being revealed, again with the exception of Zimbardo and Ebbesen, and Weick. By this I do not mean that 'methodology' is ignored —indeed there may be more here than in the average social psychology text. There is good discussion of the nature of experiments and attitude measurement, and even some philosophy of science. Lacking is the actual development of the issues. The impression is of cut-and-dried knowledge, with barely a trace of the actual convolutions and controversy surrounding our advancements, as revealed so well in Roger Brown's *Social Psychology* (1965).

Perhaps wisely, there has been no attempt at theoretical integration across the volumes, however the student may be left in a state of confusion as he tries to fit the elements into a *Gestalt*. This is the major difficulty with a text of components. Students will not have the integrated framework offered by Sherif and Sherif's *Social Psychology* (1969) or Jones and Gerard's *Foundations of Social Psychology* (1967). This, of course, is reality, but the instructor might wish to provide help to the student coping with the unintegrated elements while he is also struggling to grasp and accept other new ideas, including the basic one that social behavior is amenable to systematic causal analysis. The implications of this one observation are profound enough to cause serious turmoil to his belief structure if pursued and developed (determinism is a silent assumption in this series).

A related potential difficulty of this format, excessive overlap between volumes, has been largely controlled through editing. There is a high ratio of data to mere descriptions of studies; the reference lists are not encyclopedic (see Table 1). The content is mainstream social psychology from the psychological side. Sociology is not heavily drawn upon, and anthropological or cross-cultural perspectives are almost entirely lacking. There is a decidedly up-to-date flavor to the books; some of the authors, however, do manage to give some historical perspective, notably Gergen, Davis, and Weick. The *raison d'etre* of the series has been met—the authors *are* experts in their fields and do treat their topics with sophistication.

While the material covered is contemporary, it has a traditional air. Only briefly mentioned are nonverbal communication, planned change, and laboratory training groups. Research in psychological ecology and animal social behavior is not drawn upon. International relations are briefly skimmed over, quantitative models and simulations are barely discussed, social motivation is strikingly shortchanged, and, incredibly, socialization (including language) is omitted. Any such list must be taken as informative more than as condemnatory, for no text can do it all; here we have thorough treatment of a limited number of topics at the expense of breadth. More meaningful evaluation demands examination of the individual volumes.

Berscheid and Walster, as we can see in Table 1, comes closer to being a literature review than any other title in the series; however even its relatively large number of references does not make it a research catalog. As with the other volumes, the discussion of experimentation (almost no other type of data is presented) closely follows a set of logically ordered topics. These topics are at a level of abstraction which usually is meaningful to both the scientist and to the student, e.g., "self-esteem and romantic liking," and "the inhibition of aggressive acts." The general tone of the writing suffers, however, from a pedantic flatness. Aspects of the presentation may elude the beginning student, such as references to "extending Hullian learning theory" and to assorted design and statistical baggage,

TABLE 1

Total Number of References and Number of First Authors Referenced in Each Volume

Volume	Number of First Authors Referenced	Total Number of References
Berscheid & Walster	166	238
Davis	126	179
Gergen	81	114
Kiesler & Kiesler	71	99
Weick	146	188
Zimbardo & Ebbesen	48	67
Column Mean	106.3	147.5

without explaining what these are; however, the amount of this is slight.

This book imbeds interpersonal attraction squarely within the psychology of attitudes. The first chapter is an overview of traditional attitudinal measurement techniques; the next six effectively incorporate a wide sampling from the bulk of interpersonal attraction research into the perspective of "rewards others provide." The last chapter is entitled "Courtship and Romantic Love" and consists of an application of level of aspiration theory to partner selection.

Significant issues in interpersonal attraction research are covered systematically and intelligently. While obviously not the only means of structuring this research, Berscheid and Walster have provided us with a useful framework. *Interpersonal Attraction* answers many questions about the choices and evaluations people make of each other, perhaps too many for the student to be able to integrate effectively. If the tone were more personal the substance might be easier for him to grasp. The authors' fascinating work on how harm-doers relate to their victims and benefactors to their recipients is well represented. Research-oriented students should like the book most.

WHILE there seems to be less emphasis on the analysis of behavior in groups now than formerly, this diverse and extensive literature presents a challenge perhaps more difficult than that covered in any of the other *Topics*. Davis meets the challenge very well.

A highly useful introductory chapter sets the stage for the student and previews the volume. Immediately tackled are the classic issues of group mind; group product, structure, and process ("essentially overlapping and continuous phenomena . . . one would like to consider everything at once"); and the vexing matter of the individual vs. the group as the critical locus for analysis (the aim is to emphasize both). A categorization of dependent variables is provided: task response, social interaction, and person variables.

Chapter Two, "Individual Performance in a Social Context," is a well-organized and smooth presentation. It should be especially appreciated because much of this material has found its way into previous texts only in fragments, if at all. Now there is a place to which the instructor can send students to trace the development of this oldest area in experimental social psychology from its beginnings (audience effects, social facilitation) to the present (modeling effects). Good use of the historical perspective is also made in other sections, e.g., the treatment of group decision-making.

To discuss a vast field in a brief span, Davis has chosen to orient his writing around the task performance and structural aspects of behavior in small groups. Those favoring more of the group dynamics and interaction process approach will either be disappointed with this book or want to supplement it.

It is nice to see in Chapter Four, "Variables Affecting Group Performance," an example of the work in nonverbal communication; but why, with the increasing availability of empirical material on postural, gestural, facial, and paralinguistic communication, aren't we offered more than a smattering on eye contact? More treatment of nonverbal communication here or in the behavior exchange volume would be justifiable, exciting, and indicative of a growing body of research.

Davis' fine book suffers from several touches which hinder student comprehension. The writing is generally tight: there are no summaries or discussions of earlier themes. It is traditional, sound, and safe. The omission of the nature of face-to-face interaction theory and process is a disappointment.

GERGEN's book is well written. It is a *text:* it instructs, it leads, it clarifies. Social interaction theories here transcend the sterility of the payoff matrix, and the student sees them put to use in large social arenas (foreign aid, business) and small ones (sex roles, ingratiation, interpersonal Machiavellianism), and not without wise exploration of the difficulties inherent in generalizing beyond our laboratories. One sees the basic assumptions lurking behind our postulates, the importance of the *sequence* as well as the outcome of behavior exchanges.

What we have in coverage of social motivation in the series is largely contained in this book. We glimpse simple hedonism, Skinner's behaviorism, Hull and Spence's drive reduction, learned social motives, and then cast our eyes more leisurely on approval needs, all before we are introduced to the interaction matrix. In a broad, intriguing chapter, norms, roles, and reciprocity are evolved from one another and then smoothly lead into the following one on tactical manipulations of outcomes.

In general, the book, perhaps due to its subject matter, is better integrated than most of the others. The first chapter is devoted to criteria for evaluation of theory. The ending is not the up-in-the-air disappointment of Berscheid and Walster, Davis, or Kiesler and Kiesler. It considers four difficulties of social exchange theory: the role of motivation, of cognition, population generalizability, and the effect of accumulated knowledge upon the behavior it seeks to understand. The book is an excellent vehicle for developing in students an appreciation of the value of theory. This one hangs together.

The thought nags me that the better student will appreciate the difficulty inherent in explaining the complex behaviors to which this book is addressed, but that the average student's reaction will be, "Is that all—don't you *know* anything?" This appreciation of the subtle issues involved, rather than the difficulty level of the exposition, is the reason that instructors may decide that this volume, and those by Davis and Weick, are best assigned only to brighter, more serious students. It is a fine, careful discussion, and many of us will probably use it as a pre-lecture brushup.

CONFORMITY is a word which traditionally attracts high student interest, perhaps because they are acutely aware of resisting it and courting its rewards. The series editor and his wife give us a concise treatment which discusses the variables contributing to group-induced behavior changes. The coverage weaves these variables in around the core distinction they make between mere com-

plicance with a group and one's private acceptance of the group's position as one's own.

An interest-grabbing feature is the authors' use of the *When Prophecy Fails* cult for illustrative material in the opening chapter. It serves them well, especially in explaining the compliance-private acceptance distinction. Such variables as motivation for group goals and cognitive dissonance are included; however, the role of personality in conformity is deliberately omitted because this approach is said to encourage value judgments and circular causal reasoning.

The book weaves in a goodly amount of adjunct material: experimental design and procedure (including research ethics), the general social psychology of groups, and several theoretical positions (dissonance and reinforcement theory, social power, Kelman's three forms of social influence, Bem's self-perception model, and Brehm's reactance theory). And the traditional studies are here in suitable positions: Asch, Sherif, Crutchfield, Milgram. In addition, Charles Kiesler's own work is heavily drawn upon. We have a nice blend from the durable past and current research.

The writing is no-nonsense and straightforward. Save for the opening chapter there are no diversions into applications or implications beyond the immediate matter at hand. Topic headings are useful and actively point the student to salient issues (sometimes via questions). Trenchant chapter summaries are a nice touch lacking in the other volumes.

Here again one occasionally fears that the abilities of the introductory social psychology student have been miscalculated. For example (p. 59) E. E. Jones' excellent but complex book, *Ingratiation,* is recommended, and the parenthetical comment, "It can be read in its entirety in one evening" is made; or on page 66 "phenomenology" and on page 68 "instrumentality" of behavior are discussed without being defined. In general, however, the level of discourse should not tax the student and, indeed, the book is rapidly read.

Utilizing a looser, traditionally more heterogeneous framework than the similar book, *An Anatomy for Conformity,* (Walker and Heynes, 1967) the Kieslers have given us a serviceable, short treatment of a central area that should find adoption in a variety of courses.

WEICK'S book vies with Zimbardo and Ebbesen's for the title, 'Most Idiosyncratic of the Series,' and it wins. This is not a text or a literature review (although compatible and some opposing positions are heavily referenced); it is nothing less than the exposition of the author's new theory of organizational development.

The first two sentences say it all: "This book does not cover . . . organization theory, and its purpose is not to instruct. Instead, its purpose is to tell the reader something about how he can learn about organizations." The author fulfills his intentions brilliantly. We learn along with our students with this book. Now the instructor must consider whether he can face the insecurity of leaving a great deal of conventional organization theory wisdom behind, or whether that wisdom is preferred to the present offering.

The method of learning about organizing which Weick serves up is anticipated by his use of the verb rather than the noun in his title: the system is process oriented and dynamic and laced with cybernetic information theory. The writing is deliberately abstract, with only an occasional example but no empirical studies to support it.

Here is a volume loaded with controversy—or the potential for it if the instructor becomes an advocate in defense of the traditional views. Accepted thinking falls away all about us: "the currently popular term *complex organization* conveys more information about organization theorists than about organization." Definition in terms of goal attainment is dismissed as the necessary rationale for organizing. The term "organizational behavior" is dismissed as serving no useful function—behavior in organizations is continuous with behavior in other settings. Cognitions, he suggests, may well summarize previous actions rather than determine future ones.

An adequate rendition of Weick's model is impossible here, but its flavor can be conveyed: an organization can be defined in terms of processes of organizing. Organizing is directed toward information processing which removes equivocality from input data. Members of organizations create the environment, to which they then adapt through retrospective attentional processes. The resolving of equivocality is accomplished by sets of actors who interlock various sets of behaviors. The content-free model serves as a guide for organization watchers.

Fortunately the abstract model is related to such existing concepts as communication networks, productivity-satisfaction models, decision making (including a sharp critique of the participatory human relations approach), and organizational planning. This, plus the closing section on "Implications for Practice," provides a hearty payoff to the reader who has mastered the intricacies of Weick's model. It might have been better if some of this were scattered throughout earlier portions to reinforce the intellectual maze-runner struggling to grasp this view.

ZIMBARDO AND EBBESEN put the student first! Recognizing that concerns of attitude change investigators are not those which are rewarding areas of study for the student, they take a practical, problem-centered focus: "What findings do social psychologists offer which may be useful in building a technology of attitude change?"

I suspect that other instructors will find their students asking, as did mine, "Why can't all texts be written this way?" Without compromising the reader's intelligence the authors put conceptualizations to work on vexing practical issues. The initial chapter argues that population control is largely a problem in attitudes. Continually problems and challenges are posed to the student.

The book does not review the literature on attitudes; it does take the traditional view of them as having affective, cognitive, and behavioral components. It is sensible, sound, serious, and often fun. Inviting the reader to be an attitude change agent, he is led to consider the information needed to do the job and also the means of obtaining

and evaluating it. Chapter Two skillfully suggests, with illustrations, that attitude change theories are imbedded in other disciplines as well as in social psychology, and ends with a succinct, lucid summary of our findings regarding attitude change techniques.

The amount of methodological material in the text and four postscripts is considerable for a book of this size. Experimental design and procedure, attitude measurement techniques, and a suggested write-up format are carefully discussed, usually in relation to specific examples. Further, there is a chapter on "Reflecting on the Role of Theory in Attitude Change" which contains some philosophy of science. Covered specifically are cognitive dissonance theory and the social-learning approach. Implications, extensions and criticisms of both approaches are discussed in a manner which stimulates further interest.

In Chapter Six practical applications of attitude and behavior change are considered in earnest. Media image making, education as propaganda, psychological warfare, prejudice and its permanence, hidden persuaders, fear and persuasion, and police confessions are all discussed. Then we learn to sell curtains in Uruguay in April (believe them, it's not easy). Two "persuasion programs" skillfully show how acquired learning can be brought to bear on a series of subgoals to accomplish the task. A reminder that ethical decisions must be made by the change agent closes the chapter; somehow it seems insufficient when contrasted with the efficiency of the preceding engineering scheme.

From the only Preface in the series to the last Postscript, this is an effective, competent job. Students will learn from this book. It should be noted that the focus is on attitude *change* and not attitude formation. To cover both, one might pair this text with another, like Bem's *Beliefs, Attitudes, and Human Affairs* (1970), which emphasizes the foundations of beliefs and attitudes.