

Preface (Reprinted From First Edition)

The Vision

This *Handbook* is one tangible product of a life-long *affaire*. When I was re-introduced to social psychology, as a first-semester senior psychology major, it was love at first sight. I majored in psychology because I wanted to understand human social behavior. I had taken an introductory sociology course as a freshman. The venerable Lindesmith and Strauss was our text, and I enjoyed both the text and the course. I thought at the time that it was the *psychology* of the material that attracted me. Two years later, after several psychology courses, I walked into social psychology and realized it was the *social* that attracted me. I never looked back. Later in that semester I quizzed my faculty mentors and learned that there were three places where I could get an education in *social psychology*: at Stanford with Leon Festinger, at Columbia, and at Michigan, in the joint, interdisciplinary program directed by Ted Newcomb. Fortunately, I arrived in Ann Arbor in the fall of 1963 and spent the next 4 years taking courses and seminars in social psychology, taught by faculty in both the sociology and psychology departments. I especially value the opportunity that I had to learn from and work with Dan Katz, Herb Kelman, and Ted Newcomb during those years.

These experiences shaped my intellectual commitments. I am convinced that social psychology is best approached with an interdisciplinary perspective. I bring such a perspective to my research, undergraduate training, and mentoring of graduate students. I do not believe that social psychology is the only relevant perspective, but I do believe that it is an essential to any complete understanding of human social behavior.

As I completed my graduate work, I was fortunate to obtain a position in the University of Wisconsin Sociology Department. At that time, there were two other faculty members there who had earned degrees in the joint program at Michigan, Andy Michener and Shalom Schwartz. The three of us did much of the teaching in the social psychology area, graduate and undergraduate. We shared the view that social psychology is an interdisciplinary field, that combining relevant work by persons working in psychology and in sociology leads to a more comprehensive understanding. We viewed social psychology as an empirical field; theory, both comprehensive and mid-range, is essential to the development of the field but so is empirical research testing and refining those theoretical ideas. We believed that research employing all types of methods, qualitative and quantitative, make an important contribution.

What, you ask, is the relevance of this personal history? The answer is that it is the source of the vision that guides my work. You will see this vision of the field reflected in various ways throughout this *Handbook*.

I was very pleased when the Social Psychology Section of the American Sociological Association decided to sponsor the volume, *Social Psychology: Sociological Perspectives*, edited by Rosenberg

and Turner. I felt that there was a need for such a volume that could be used as a textbook in graduate courses. Following its publication in 1981, I used the book regularly in my graduate course. According to Cook, Fine, and House, it became the textbook of choice for many sociologists teaching graduate courses in social psychology (1995, p. ix). The need for updating and expanding that volume to reflect new trends in our field led the Section to commission a new work, published as *Sociological Perspectives in Social Psychology* in 1995. I used this book in graduate courses for several years. By 2001, I felt that a new edition was needed. Conversations with members and officers of the Social Psychology Section indicated that the Section had no plans to commission such a book. At about this time, Howard Kaplan, general Editor of this series of Handbooks, invited me to edit a volume on social psychology.

The Goals

My goals as editor are similar to those of my distinguished predecessors, including Morris Rosenberg, Ralph Turner, Karen Cook, Gary Fine, and Jim House. I have also relied on the *Handbooks of Social Psychology*, which draw together work in our field from a more psychological perspective, in both my research and teaching. Now in the fourth edition, published in 1998, it convinced me of the value of a volume that can serve as a sourcebook for researchers and practitioners. One goal in preparing this *Handbook* is to provide such a sourcebook, or a standard professional reference for the field of social psychology (Gilbert, Fiske, & Lindzey, 1998, xi). A second goal is to provide an opportunity for scholars in the field to take stock of and reflect on work in their areas of expertise. Authors were invited not only to draw together past work but also to identify limitations in and to point to needed future directions. Third, I hope that this volume will serve as the textbook of choice for graduate courses for the next several years.

The Field of Social Psychology

Social psychology is a major subfield within sociology. The principal journal in the area, *Social Psychology Quarterly*, was founded in 1938 (?) and is one of only six journals published by the American Sociological Association. Sociologists share this field with psychologists. This has led to diverse views of the relationship between psychological and sociological social psychology. Twenty-five years ago, a widely held view was that these subfields were relatively distinct, that each was a distinctive face with its own core questions, theory, and methods (House, 1977). It is certainly true that there are differences in core questions; a comparison of the Table of Contents of the *Handbook of Social Psychology* (1998) and *Sociological Perspectives on Social Psychology* (1995) will make clear these differences. Psychologists often emphasize processes that occur inside the individual, including perception, cognition, motivation, and emotion, and the antecedents and consequences of these processes. In analyzing interaction, their focus is often on how aspects of self, attitudes, and interpersonal perception influence behavior. Sociologists have traditionally been more concerned with social collectivities, including families, organizations, communities, and social institutions.

Social psychology is the study of the interface between these two sets of phenomena, the nature and causes of human social behavior (Michener & DeLamater, 1999). Both intra-individual and the social context influence and are influenced by individual behavior. The *core concerns* of social psychology include:

- the impact of one individual on another;
- the impact of a group on its individual members;

- the impact of individuals on the groups in which they participate; and
- the impact of one group on another.

Given this set of concerns, I share Cook, Fine, and House's (1995) view that social psychology is interdisciplinary, that it involves and requires a synthesis of the relevant work in the two disciplines on which it draws. The apparent division into two social psychologies reflects in part the bureaucratic structure of the modern American university, including the division of knowledge by departments and the practice of requiring a faculty member to have a single tenure home. I do not believe that there are insurmountable differences in theory, method, or substance between the work of psychological and sociological social psychologists. The so-called cognitive revolution brought to the fore in psychology the same processes traditionally emphasized by symbolic interaction theory, identity theory, and the dramaturgical perspective in sociology.

One facet of social psychology within sociology is a set of theoretical perspectives. Rosenberg and Turner (1981) included chapter-length treatment of four theories: symbolic interaction, social exchange, reference group, and role theory. Cook, Fine, and House (1996) did not include a section devoted to theory, using instead an organization based on substantive areas. I have included a section on theory, with chapters on symbolic interaction, social exchange, expectation states, social structure and personality, and the evolutionary perspectives. The differences in the topics of theoretical chapters between Rosenberg and Turner and this *Handbook* reflect the changes in the field in the last two decades of the twentieth century. Although it remains a useful metaphor, the role perspective *qua* theory has not flourished. Renewed interest in cognitive processes and their social context, and the development of social identity theory, has recast some of the concerns of the reference group perspective. Expectation states theory has become a major perspective, reflecting the continuing incremental and innovative theoretical development and research activities of a new generation of social psychologists. The rapid development of evolutionary perspectives and their application to such topics as interpersonal attraction, mate selection, family, and sexuality are the most visible changes to have occurred in the field.

Another facet is the methods we use to gather empirical data. Those who share(d) the two social psychologies view point(ed) to the dominance of the experiment in psychological social psychology, and of the survey in sociological social psychology. While there was a pronounced difference in this regard in the 1970s and 1980s, that difference has narrowed greatly in the past decade. Researchers, whether psychologists or sociologists, interested in areas such as prejudice and racism, mental health, and adult personality have always relied heavily on surveys. Recent developments in the analysis of data and the increasing use of longitudinal designs have enhanced our ability to test causal models with survey data; the experimental method is no longer the only way to study causality. Furthermore, the use of the experiment by sociologically oriented social psychologists is increasing, particularly in research on expectation states and exchange theory. This development is welcomed by those of us who believe that problems are best studied using multiple methods. Finally, there has been a renaissance in the use of systematic observation by sociologically oriented researchers. Thus, in 2002, social psychologists from both sides of the aisle are using surveys, experiments and observational methods, and learning from each other on how to improve these techniques.

At the same time, social psychology remains well integrated into the larger discipline of sociology. We share the use of the theories and methods described above with other sociologists. In our research and writing, we focus on topics that are of interest and in some cases central to the discipline: life-course analyses, social networks, socialization, status, stereotyping, and stigma, to name a few. Work by social psychologists is integral to most of the other major subfields in sociology: collective behavior and social movements, development, deviance, emotion, health, language, and social stratification. The relevance of social psychology to these topics is made clear in many of the chapters that follow.

In their Preface, Rosenberg and Turner characterized sociological social psychology as having reached the late adolescent stage of development; as such, it is heir to the various identity crises that

so often characterize that developmental stage. This volume, we hope, will assist it in discovering and establishing that identity (1981, xxxiv). Fourteen years later, in their Introduction, Cook, Fine, and House stated we have grown as a field and become more integrated into the discipline (1995, xii) and suggested that the field had reached early middle age. In light of the fact that only 8 years has passed since then, and of the continued growth, emergence of new areas of work, and increasing integration captured in these pages, we cannot have grown much older. I foresee a long and healthy midlife.

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