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## UNIT 1 GENERAL ISSUES IN SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY 1

### Issue 1. Is Deception of Human Participants Ethical? 2

**YES:** Alan C. Elms, from “Keeping Deception Honest: Justifying Conditions for Social Scientific Research Stratagems,” in T. L. Beauchamp, R. R. Faden, R. J. Wallace, & L. Walters, eds., *Ethical Issues in Social Science Research* (Johns Hopkins University Press, 1982) 4

**NO:** Diana Baumrind, from “Research Using Intentional Deception: Ethical Issues Revisited,” *American Psychologist* (vol. 40, 1985) 15

Social psychologist Alan Elms argues that deception is usually justified when the benefits of research outweigh the ethical costs of the deception. Psychologist Diana Baumrind believes that deception is never ethically acceptable. The costs of deception seem to be greater than most social psychologists believe.

### Issue 2. Should Social Psychologists Try to Solve Social Problems? 28

**YES:** Arthur Aron and Elaine Aron, from “Chutzpah: Social Psychology Takes on the Big Issues,” *The Heart of Social Psychology* (Lexington Books, 1989) 30

**NO:** David Kipnis, from “Accounting for the Use of Behavior Technologies in Social Psychology,” *American Psychology* (vol. 49, 1994) 38

Arthur and Elaine Aron believe that social psychologists are passionately devoted to promoting positive social change. David Kipnis argues that social psychological research benefits those with power and serves to perpetuate the status quo.

### Issue 3. Can Experimental Social Psychology and Social Constructionism Coexist? 50

**YES:** John T. Jost and Arie W. Kruglanski, from “The Estrangement of Social Constructionism and Experimental Social Psychology: History of the Rift and Prospects for Reconciliation,” *Personality and Social Psychology Review* (August 2002) 52

**NO:** **Jonathan Potter**, from “Experimenting with Reconciliation: A Comment on Jost and Kruglanski,” *Personality and Social Psychology Review* (August 2002) 71

Psychologists John Jost and Arie Kruglanski argue that the differences between experimental social psychology and social constructionism are not nearly as great as most believe. They believe that the two approaches are complementary, not contradictory, and that social psychology would benefit from a more balanced integration of both perspectives. Social constructionist theorist Jonathan Potter agrees that the lack of engagement between the two perspectives has been counterproductive. However, he believes that some experimental psychologists have unfairly labeled the social constructionist approach as “anti-science” and that true reconciliation between the different approaches is unlikely.

## UNIT 2 SOCIAL COGNITION 77

### Issue 4. Are Our Social Perceptions Often Inaccurate? 78

**YES:** **Lee Ross and Richard E. Nisbett**, from *The Person and the Situation: Perspectives of Social Psychology* (McGraw-Hill, 1991) 80

**NO:** **David C. Funder**, from “Errors and Mistakes: Evaluating the Accuracy of Social Judgment,” *Psychological Bulletin* (vol. 101, 1987) 87

Social psychologists Lee Ross and Richard Nisbett believe that people’s perceptions of others are often inaccurate because of the dispositionalist bias—the tendency for people to mistakenly believe that the behavior of others is due largely to their personality or disposition. David C. Funder, a personality psychologist, believes that the artificial laboratory experiments cited by Ross and Nisbett do not necessarily indicate that people’s perceptions in the real world are often mistaken. In the real world, people’s behavior is often due to their disposition.

### Issue 5. Does Cognitive Dissonance Explain Why Behavior Can Change Attitudes? 100

**YES:** **Leon Festinger and James M. Carlsmith**, from “Cognitive Consequences of Forced Compliance,” *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology* (vol. 58, 1959) 102

**NO:** **Daryl J. Bem**, from “Self-Perception: An Alternative Interpretation of Cognitive Dissonance Phenomena,” *Psychological Review* (May 1967) 112

Social psychologists Leon Festinger and James M. Carlsmith propose their theory of cognitive dissonance to explain why people’s attitudes may change after they have acted in a way that is inconsistent with their true attitudes. Social psychologist Daryl J. Bem proposes a theory of self-perception, which he believes can explain Festinger and Carlsmith’s results better than cognitive dissonance theory.

### Issue 6. Are Self-Esteem Improvement Programs Misguided? 118

**YES:** **Roy F. Baumeister**, from “Should Schools Try to Boost Self-Esteem? Beware the Dark Side” *American Educator* (Summer 1996) 120

**NO:** William B. Swann Jr., Christine Chang-Schneider, and Katie Larsen McClarty, from "Do People's Self-Views Matter? Self-Concept and Self-Esteem in Everyday Life," *American Psychologist* (February/March 2007) 131

Social psychologist Roy Baumeister argues that self-esteem generally has little or no influence on most important outcomes and that excessively high self-esteem can sometimes have negative consequences. Psychologists William Swann, Christine Chang-Schneider, and Katie McClarty argue that self-esteem is associated with important outcomes. Although some advocates of self-esteem improvement programs have overstated the importance of having a positive self-image, programs designed to raise self-esteem still appear to have beneficial effects.

## **Issue 7. Is the Millennial Generation More Narcissistic Than Other Generations? 148**

**YES:** Jean M. Twenge, Sara Konrath, Joshua D. Foster, W. Keith Campbell, and Brad J. Bushman, from "Egos Inflating Over Time: A Cross-Temporal Meta-Analysis of the Narcissistic Personality Inventory," *Journal of Personality* (vol. 76, pp. 875–901, 2008) 150

**NO:** Stephanie Rosenbloom, from "Generation Me vs. You Revisited," *New York Times* (January 17, 2008) 163

Psychologist Jean Twenge, author of the book *Generation Me*, and her colleagues point out that there have been substantial increases in narcissism in recent decades, and express concern over the implications of this trend. *New York Times* writer Stephanie Rosenbloom discusses the research of other psychologists who argue that there has not been a marked change in narcissism and that the Millennial Generation is being unfairly labeled as narcissistic.

## **Issue 8. Can People Accurately Detect Lies? 167**

**YES:** Paul Ekman, Maureen O'Sullivan, and Mark G. Frank, from "A Few Can Catch a Liar," *Psychological Science* (May 1999) 169

**NO:** Bella M. DePaulo, from "Spotting Lies: Can Humans Learn to Do Better?" *Current Directions in Psychological Science* (June 1994) 175

Paul Ekman, Maureen O'Sullivan, and Mark Frank discuss the evidence that suggests that some individuals are reliable lie detectors. While the average person is not very good at detecting lies, some individuals seem to be able to detect deception quite well. Social Psychologist Bella DePaulo agrees that the average person is not a very reliable lie detector. However, DePaulo believes that improving peoples' lie detection skills is not as straightforward as it may seem.

## **Issue 9. Should Research from Social Cognitive Neuroscience Be Used to Inform Public Policy? 182**

**YES:** Sonia K. Kang, Michael Inzlicht, and Belle Derks, from "Social Neuroscience and Public Policy on Intergroup Relations: A Hegelian Analysis," *Journal of Social Issues* (vol. 66, pp. 586–591, 2010) 184

**NO:** **Sonia K. Kang, Michael Inzlicht, and Belle Derks**, from “Social Neuroscience and Public Policy on Intergroup Relations: A Hegelian Analysis,” *Journal of Social Issues* (vol. 66, pp. 591–596, 2010) 190

Arguing in favor of the importance of social cognitive neuroscience, Sonia Kang and her colleagues point out that this new field offers great promise. These innovative techniques may help to answer some important policy-related questions that cannot be addressed by more conventional approaches. Sonia Kang and her colleagues next argue in favor of the opposing perspective. They suggest that social cognitive neuroscience may not yet be a well-defined field. It may be premature for this research to inform public policy.

### **Issue 10. Do Positive Illusions Lead to Healthy Behavior? 199**

**YES:** **Shelley E. Taylor and Jonathon D. Brown**, from “Illusion and Well-Being: A Social Psychological Perspective on Mental Health,” *Psychological Bulletin* (March 1988) 201

**NO:** **C. Randall Colvin, Jack Block, and David C. Funder**, from “Overly Positive Self-Evaluations and Personality: Negative Implications for Mental Health,” *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* (June 1995) 216

Shelley Taylor and Jonathon Brown argue that people have unrealistically positive views of themselves. These “positive illusions” promote psychological well-being. C. Randall Colvin, Jack Block, and David Funder agree that many people have positive views of themselves. However, these positive self-views should not necessarily be considered illusory.

## **UNIT 3 SOCIAL INFLUENCE 223**

### **Issue 11. Do Milgram’s Obedience Experiments Help Explain the Nature of the Holocaust? 224**

**YES:** **John P. Sabini and Maury Silver**, from “Destroying the Innocent with a Clear Conscience: A Sociopsychology of the Holocaust,” in Joel Dimsdale, ed., *Survivors, Victims, and Perpetrators: Essays on the Nazi Holocaust* (Hemisphere Books, 1980) 226

**NO:** **Florence R. Miale and Michael Selzer**, from “Banality?” *The Nuremberg Mind: The Psychology of the Nazi Leaders* (Quadrangle/New York Times Book Company, 1975) 236

Social psychologists John P. Sabini and Maury Silver believe that the Obedience Experiments captured the most important psychological aspects of the Holocaust, by demonstrating that normal people can be made to harm others with alarming ease. Psychotherapist Florence R. Miale and political scientist Michael Selzer believe that Milgram’s results are not as convincing as is often believed. They contend that the findings of these controversial experiments can be explained by individual differences in participants’ willingness to inflict pain on others.

## Issue 12. Is It Possible to Truly Replicate Milgram's Obedience Experiments? 244

**YES:** Jerry M. Burger, from "Replicating Milgram: Would People Still Obey Today?" *APS Observer* (vol. 64, pp. 1–11, 2007) 246

**NO:** Arthur G. Miller, from "Reflections on 'Replicating Milgram' (Burger, 2009)," *American Psychologist* (vol. 64, pp. 20–27, 2009) 263

Jerry Burger believes that with a few minor changes, he was able to replicate Stanley Milgram's obedience experiments. He argues that his replications of the experiments were able to address some lingering questions about the nature of obedience. Arthur Miller agrees that the new experiments are intriguing. However, he believes that the modifications to Milgram's original experimental paradigm were too great to allow direct comparisons between the original experiments and the new version.

## Issue 13. Does the Stanford Prison Experiment Help Explain the Effects of Imprisonment? 273

**YES:** Craig Haney and Philip Zimbardo, from "The Past and Future of U.S. Prison Policy: Twenty-Five Years after the Stanford Prison Experiment," *American Psychologist* (July 1998) 275

**NO:** David T. Lykken, from "Psychology and the Criminal Justice System: A Reply to Haney and Zimbardo," *The General Psychologist* (Spring 2000) 290

Social psychologists Craig Haney and Philip Zimbardo believe that the results of the Stanford Prison Experiment should inform U.S. prison policy. Behavioral geneticist David T. Lykken argues that the experiment was not realistic enough to say anything meaningful about real prison life and that personality factors are more important in determining the behavior of prisoners.

## Issue 14. Is Subliminal Persuasion a Myth? 299

**YES:** Anthony R. Pratkanis, from "The Cargo-Cult Science of Subliminal Persuasion," *Skeptical Inquirer* (vol. 16, 1992) 301

**NO:** Nicholas Epley, Kenneth Savitsky, and Robert A. Kachelnski, from "What Every Skeptic Should Know About Subliminal Persuasion," *Skeptical Inquirer* (vol. 23, 1999) 313

Social psychologist Anthony Pratkanis argues that research claiming to demonstrate the efficacy of subliminal persuasion is either fraudulent or flawed. Carefully controlled experiments do not demonstrate that subliminal persuasion can have any effect on behavior. Nicholas Epley, Kenneth Savitsky, and Robert Kachelnski agree that much of the research examining subliminal persuasion is flawed. However, more recent research using better methodologies has demonstrated that subliminal stimuli can influence behavior.

## Issue 15. Can People Really Be Brainwashed? 326

**YES:** Trudy Solomon, from "Programming and Deprogramming the Moonies: Social Psychology Applied," *The Brainwashing/Deprogramming Controversy* (Edwin Mellen Press, 1983) 328

**NO:** James T. Richardson, from "A Social Psychological Critique of 'Brainwashing' Claims about Recruitment to New Religions," *The Handbook on Cults and Sects in America* (JAI Press, 1993) 337

Psychologist Trudy Solomon argues that well-known social-psychological principles may explain the process by which brainwashing can occur. Also, Solomon argues that some religious movements, generally referred to as cults, use these principles to recruit new members. Sociologist James T. Richardson believes that social psychological principles do not necessarily suggest that brainwashing is commonly used in new religious movements. Instead he believes that these organizations use the same recruitment tactics used by many organizations and therefore cannot be considered "brainwashing."

## UNIT 4 SOCIAL RELATIONS 351

### Issue 16. Is Stereotyping Inevitable? 352

**YES:** Patricia G. Devine, from "Stereotypes and Prejudice: Their Automatic and Controlled Components," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* (January 1989) 354

**NO:** Lorella Lepore and Rupert Brown, from "Category and Stereotype Activation: Is Prejudice Inevitable?" *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* (February 1997) 369

Social psychologist Patricia G. Devine argues that some forms of racial stereotyping may be automatic and therefore inevitable. In order to prevent these automatic stereotypes from biasing judgments of others, whites must make a conscious effort to avoid responding in a prejudicial manner. Social psychologists Lorella Lepore and Rupert Brown believe that automatic stereotyping may not be universal among whites. Some whites may be more likely to engage in automatic stereotyping than others, and as a result stereotyping is not necessarily inevitable among all whites.

### Issue 17. Does the Implicit Association Test (IAT) Measure Racial Prejudice? 384

**YES:** Shankar Vedantam, from "See No Bias," *The Washington Post* (January 23, 2005) 386

**NO:** Amy Wax and Philip E. Tetlock, from "We Are All Racists At Heart," *The Wall Street Journal* (December 1, 2005) 393

The performance of most white Americans on the Implicit Association Test reflects hidden or "implicit" racial prejudice. Since implicit prejudice can result in discriminatory behavior toward African Americans, it is appropriate to consider scores on the Implicit Association Test to be a form of racial prejudice. Most white Americans are aware of the negative stereotypes of African Americans that exist in American society, even though they may not believe those stereotypes to be true. So the performance of whites on the Implicit Association Test likely reflects their knowledge of these negative stereotypes, rather than true racial prejudice.

### Issue 18. Can Stereotypes Lead to Accurate Perceptions of Others? 396

**YES:** Lee J. Jussim, Clark R. McCauley, and Yueh-Ting Lee, from "Why Study Stereotype Accuracy and Inaccuracy?"

*Stereotype Accuracy: Toward Appreciating Group Differences*  
(APA, 1995) 398

**NO:** Charles Stangor, from "Content and Application Inaccuracy in Social Stereotyping," *Stereotype Accuracy: Toward Appreciating Group Differences* (APA, 1995) 409

Lee Jussim, Clark McCauley, and Yueh-Ting Lee believe that stereotypes have been stereotyped. Stereotypes are not always inaccurate and do not invariably lead to biased judgments of others, as most social psychologists seem to believe. Charles Stangor draws a distinction between the *content* accuracy and *application* accuracy in the use of stereotypes. According to Stangor, even if the content of a stereotype is accurate, applying the stereotype to judge an individual within a group is still likely to yield inaccurate perceptions.

### Issue 19. Does True Altruism Exist? 420

**YES:** C. Daniel Batson, Bruce D. Duncan, Paula Ackerman, Terese Buckley, and Kimberly Birch, from "Is Empathic Emotion a Source of Altruistic Motivation?" *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* (February 1981) 422

**NO:** Robert B. Cialdini, Mark Schaller, Donald Houlihan, Kevin Arps, Jim Fultz, and Arthur L. Beaman, from "Empathy-Based Helping: Is It Selflessly or Selfishly Motivated?" *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* (April 1987) 433

Social psychologist C. Daniel Batson and his colleagues believe that people sometimes help for purely altruistic reasons. He proposes that empathy is the key factor responsible for altruism and describes the results of an experiment that supports his position. Social psychologist Robert Cialdini and his colleagues are not convinced that empathy alone can motivate helping. Instead they propose that people often help others in order to make themselves feel better.

### Issue 20. Does Media Violence Cause Aggression? 444

**YES:** L. Rowell Huesmann and Laramie D. Taylor, from "The Role of Media Violence in Violent Behavior," *Annual Review of Public Health* (vol. 27, pp. 393–415, 2006) 446

**NO:** Jonathan L. Freedman, from *Villain or Scapegoat? Media Violence and Aggression* (University of Toronto Press 2002, pp. 3–21) 461

L. Rowell Huesmann and Laramie D. Taylor contend that an overwhelming amount of research indicates that media violence is a significant cause of violent and aggressive behavior. Therefore, media violence is a real threat to public health. Jonathan L. Freedman argues that the evidence linking aggression to media violence is not very strong. Psychologists who contend that such a link has been proven are misunderstanding or misrepresenting what the data actually indicate.

Contributors 471