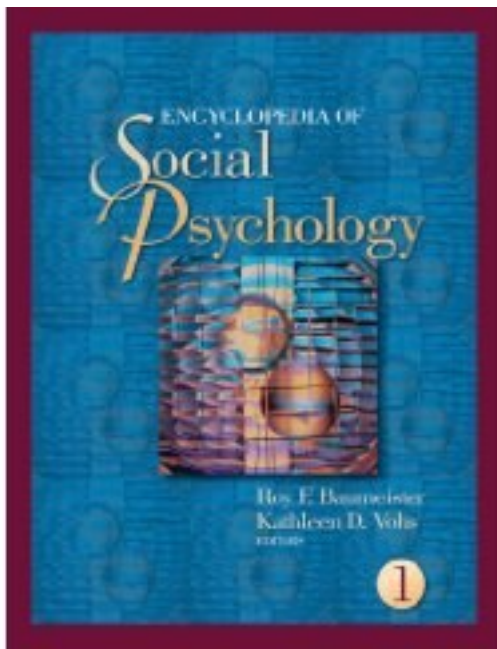


Encyclopedia of Social Psychology



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From Booklist

Social psychology, defined in this encyclopedia's introduction as "the study of how 'normal' people think, feel, and act," is part of all academic psychology departments. As is the case with most subdisciplines, the field has its own vocabulary, usage of terms, and history. Although there are numerous encyclopedias of psychology as a whole, there has been little published specifically in the area of social psychology. In the introduction, editors Baumeister (Florida State University) and Vohs (University of Minnesota) make a special point of describing how they sought only experts in the field to write the articles, and how those articles are designed to meet the needs of readers who are new to the field, without being simplistic. This is, in all its aspects, an

excellent example of a subject encyclopedia. More than 550 entries cover diverse topics and follow a clear and easy-to-understand format. Each begins with a definition and ends with see also references and a list of further readings. At the front of each volume are an alphabetical list of entries as well as a "Reader's Guide," which sorts entries into thematic groupings. At the end of each volume is a comprehensive index. There are no biographical entries. Examples of entries include Belief perseverance, Culture of honor, Door-in-the-face technique, Group cohesiveness, Path analysis, Romantic love, Sexual economics theory, and Sleeper effect. As a comparison, none of these concepts are covered as separate entries in Encyclopedia of Psychology (Oxford, 2000). This is not to say that the information might not be available in other sources but merely to show that there is a unique quality to the vocabulary of a subdiscipline that might not be given sufficient coverage in the literature of the larger science. Academic libraries where social psychology is a strong part of the curriculum will want to own this, as will large public libraries where there is interest in the subject. --Danise Hoover

Review

"The editors state that 'social psychology is the study of how normal people think, feel and act.' The contributors then describe many behaviors that fall within and outside wide normal limits. They include terms and theories that are used to study, explain and understand human behavior. Most entries begin with a definition and include appropriate subheadings to highlight important aspects, e.g., history, background, usage, verbal illustrations, evidence implications, and other labels that provide focus. See also references and short 'further readings' lists accompany each signed entry. Both volumes have a complete, highly detailed index that includes the subheadings and other relevant mentions of the term. The specialist nature of the vocabulary is evident in the discussion of such terms as 'elevation,' as being the desire to perform acts of charity, and as being moved by excellence in another person; and the 'Ringlemann Effect,' which means expending less effort as part of a group than when working alone. The set offers clear descriptions of commonly used and sometimes misunderstood term, e.g., cultural differences, authoritarian personality, and neuroticism. The field has expanded since publication of 'The Blackwell Encyclopedia of Social Psychology,' ed. by A Manstead and M. Hewstone et al. (CH, Jan'96, 33-2457), and this work is a valuable response to that. Summing Up: Recommended. All Levels."

-CHOICE (CHOICE)

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