
Preface

In 2009, Shelley Correll organized a session on “Social Psychology: Processes Underlying Stratification” for the annual meeting of the American Sociological Association. The panelists were Cecilia Ridgeway, Larry Bobo, Devah Pager, and Jane McLeod. Inspired by the presentations, Howard Kaplan approached Jane McLeod immediately after the session about the possibility of editing a handbook on the social psychology of stratification as part of the *Handbooks of Sociology and Social Research* series. Flattered by the invitation, but a bit daunted by the task, Jane asked for time to think it over. The timing was not good, and Jane was concerned that scholars from traditions other than her own would not accord her legitimacy. Howard addressed her first concern by offering her an extended timeline for production of the volume. Jane addressed her second concern by asking Michael Schwalbe and Ed Lawler to join her as editors—her first, and very best, decision.

Our shared vision for the volume is to provide a comprehensive overview of social psychological research on inequality for graduate student and professional audiences. The volume draws from all of the major theoretical traditions in sociological social psychology. By so doing, it demonstrates the breadth and depth of what social psychology has to offer to the study of inequality. At the same time, it testifies to the common concerns that unite sociological social psychologists. Although we often think of scholars from the group processes, symbolic interactionist, and social structure and personality orientations as holding fundamentally different assumptions about the social world, we see more connection than division in the chapters of this volume. Sociological social psychologists share a common interest in analyzing how, why, and under what conditions people come to be seen as different and, as a consequence, to be given unequal access to valued societal resources. Each chapter of the volume offers unique insight into how interpersonal interactions, shared cultural beliefs, constructed meanings, and material resources contribute to inequality. As a whole, the chapters confirm that inequality is a result not only of overt conflict, competition, repression, and exploitation, but also of subtle (and sometimes unconscious processes) of exclusion, othering, and devaluation.

Much of the credit for this volume goes to the chapter authors. We gave them a formidable task. In addition to preparing a basic review of their topic, we asked them: to address the unique contributions of sociological social psychology to their area; when relevant, to discuss the historical roots of social psychological concepts and theories in classic sociological writings; to consider the complementary and conflicting insights that derive from different social psychological traditions in sociology; and to identify critical

questions that have not been answered and that have the potential to advance the field, especially those that arise from missed opportunities for conversation across subfields of social psychology or between social psychology and mainstream sociology. We are deeply grateful that the authors undertook the task with care and thought. Their commitment to the project, their willingness to share outlines and chapters with each other, and their goodwill in responding to suggestions for revisions were essential to the volume's success. For all of this, we thank them.

Jane wishes to thank Michael Schwalbe and Ed Lawler for joining her in this project. She had not met either of them before asking them to serve as co-editors and did not expect them to say yes. That they did so speaks to their collegiality as well as to their comfort with risk and uncertainty! She also thanks Jim House for introducing her to the field of sociological social psychology many years ago, her colleagues in the Department of Sociology at Indiana University for their consistent and constant support, and the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences for providing the financial support that allowed her to hire Jennifer Caputo as editorial assistant. Jennifer managed the flow of manuscripts on and off the editors' desks, and did all of the tedious work of copyediting, formatting, and the like. These printed pages would not exist without her contributions. Finally, Jane thanks her family—Steve Krahnke, Sophie Krahnke, and Nell Krahnke—for stepping in at home so that she could stay late at the office.

Finally, none of this would have been possible without Howard Kaplan's forethought and leadership. Although he is no longer with us, the vibrancy and generosity of his intellectual spirit live on in this volume.

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