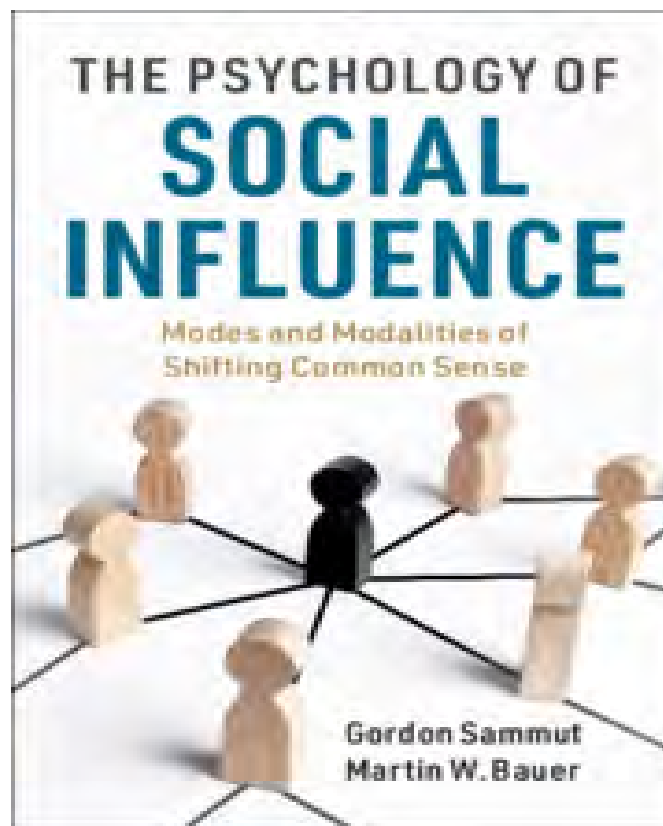


Book Review: *The Psychology of Social Influence: Modes and Modalities of Shifting Common Sense*

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Most college students in the social and behavioral sciences might have chosen majors such as communication, social psychology, political science, sociology, education, etc., because their main concern is with or about social influence. They are especially eager to grasp a big picture of social influence if they are interested in a

postgraduate program. They are not yet specialists or experts and so they need a survey and guide. This book seems the best fit for meeting that need. It can serve as a textbook for teaching senior undergraduate or beginning graduate classes across the field of social and behavioral sciences.

This book covers all key empirical concepts and noted experiments (e.g., Asch's conformity, Milgram's obedience) used in research on social influence. The authors build a periodic table of social influence (p. 236), reminiscent of the periodic table of elements used in chemistry. It comprises a typology built on three dimensions: Action modality representing social influence, mode or means of social influence, and functional phase of social influence to achieve common sense as the outcome.

The first, action modality, is represented by nine concepts used in research: Crowd behavior, leadership, norm formation, conformity, obedience, persuasion, prototyping, the *fait accompli*, and resistance. The second, mode, is done by three means: Face-to-face interaction, mass mediation, and designed artifact. The third, functional phase, is done three ways: Assimilation, accommodation, and normalization. These produce 81 types on the condition that all the three dimensions and their respective classifications are orthogonal. The authors argue that many of these types have been studied, but some still need to be studied, illuminating the potential for future research on social influence. This periodic table would help beginning and advanced researchers grasp the big picture of social influence and to think about their future research plans.

The authors point out that social influence is omnipresent, enticing and making new consequences for the end product, what they call "intersubjectivity," for example, common sense, (shared) frame of reference, or social representation. Social influence, as "inter-objectivity," is also quite consequential by mode of designed artifacts (e.g., statues, monuments, installations). They also argue that social influence can be assessed only "in hindsight," after the fact.

These points seem to reflect the perspective of our traditional science, that is, of solving puzzles after the fact. It looks to be inevitable that such studies focus on particular bodies, products, and/or circumstances that are readily observable. Such studies then generalize properties of those entities and transform them into empirical

concepts and try to discover relationships among those concepts.

So then, what is this book missing? For example, what problem initially involves the effort of social influence? Why not, first, figure out the problem that threatens life, individual, or collective? What is or could be the behavioral process per se of social influence, not just its actions' internal or external factors, that will lead to its final outcome such as public opinion, frame, norm, common sense, and so on? Is the outcome contributing to solving the original problem? Isn't it just re-enforcing decision-making behavior and thereby augmenting conflicts between options, leading to, for example, polarization? Eventually, how could social influence be made ideationally constructive to help solve our problems, individual and collective? These questions need to be addressed and they might be answered by a new, complementary perspective of explicating social influence as behavioral process per se (e.g., Carter, 2021; Kim, 2020). But that is a different book.

Again, this book best provides new and old researchers with established knowledge. No one should start research without exposure to the research covered in the book. The authors' periodic table covers major dimensions related to social influence research that might guide them not only to think about new research areas but also to imagine what are missing fundamentally.

References

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