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Edited by Laura V. Machia , Christopher R. Agnew , Ximena B. Arriaga
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Introduction

LAURA V. MACHIA

> In this book is presented a theory of interpersonal relations and group functioning. The major motivation that governed this effort was a desire to give cumulative treatment to a discussion of some persistent problems in social psychology and to answer for ourselves the question: how do the data of the field look when they are arranged by their relevance to a conceptual structure that begins with relatively simple assumptions and adds further ones only as they become necessary? If it is not entirely idiosyncratic, any success along these lines might be expected to be useful both as a guide to research and in contributing some order and simplification to an increasingly bewildering congeries of fact.
>
> (Thibaut & Kelley, 1959,p. 1)

Above are the opening lines of the now-classic 1959 Interdependence Theory (IT) book by John Thibaut and Hal Kelley, *The Social Psychology of Groups*. This passage not only sets the stage for the book, telling the reader what to expect in the 300-plus pages that followed, but clairvoyantly told the field what to expect in the 60-plus years that have followed. IT has indeed been useful as a guide to research and as a way to order the myriad empirical facts uncovered about relationships, not just in social psychology, but in diverse disciplines spanning the social and behavioral sciences. In this volume, we hope once again to contribute some order and simplification to an even more increasingly robust literature, as the simple assumptions of IT remain as relevant as ever.

Interdependence Theory (IT) utilizes social psychological, economic, sociological, and learning theories to explain behavior (Thibaut & Kelley, 1959). It is a powerful theory that explains how elements of an interpersonal situation and characteristics of the people interacting combine in ways that predict specific experiences and outcomes (Rusbult & Van Lange, 2003). Research adopting this perspective has explained diverse phenomena within relationships such as cooperation, trust, dependence, power, and relationship maintenance, among others (see VanderDrift & Agnew, 2020). At its core, the theory is unchanged since its original articulation. However, its core has

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informed empirical work spanning content areas and scientific disciplines, and that empirical work has subsequently extended the breadth of the theory in important, lasting ways.

The first part of this volume, titled "Interdependence, Situations, and Context," features four chapters that most directly focus on extending the core tenet of IT, which is that situations are central to understanding interaction and behavior (Kelley et al., 2003). All of the chapters in the first part aid in defining and understanding the power of situations and contextual factors. In Chapter 1, Columbus, Righetti, and Balliet discuss Functional Interdependence Theory, which posits that people are well-prepared to understand situations in terms of interdependence features. They review the new taxonomies and methods that allow for researchers to measure the interdependent situations people experience in their relationships. The advances summarized in this chapter allow researchers from multiple theoretical perspectives (e.g., attachment), interested in any interpersonal process (e.g., maintenance) to measure and understand how the extent of interdependence between partners contributes to the partners' behaviors and acquired outcomes.

In Chapter 2, Holmes notes that the naturally occurring costs that arise from interdependence can undermine partners' motivation to act in caring ways toward each other. He proposes that overcoming these challenges requires that partners stay perpetually focused on the long-term rewards of interdependence without being distracted by the momentary costs that occur due to interdependence. The theory summarized in this chapter allows researchers to understand and predict when and why partners will act on their self-protective goals, and when and why they will act on their pro-relationship goals.

In Chapter 3, Chopik highlights an exciting new application of geographic modeling to examine how geographical variation in social behavior can be applied to understanding close relationship processes. Not only are partners interdependent with each other, but they are interdependent with their entire social and physical space, which has predictable geographic patterns. The theory detailed in this chapter will be immensely useful for readers interested in understanding the greater geographic contexts in which interdependence arises, and the helpful primer on best methodological and visualization practices will guide readers who are interested in including geographic analyses into their existing research.

Closing the first part, in Chapter 4, Gaines and Hardin examine ethnicity and country of origin as potential contextual moderators of interdependence processes. Indeed, culture has an immense impact on social behavior. Although Thibaut and Kelley (1959) presented interdependence theory as a culturally universal perspective, it is reasonable to expect culture to affect interdependent processes in meaningful ways. Readers who are interested in how the broader culture surrounding an interdependent relationship affects

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that relationship's processes will benefit from Gaines and Hardin's explanation of how to develop and test hypotheses in which culture is explicitly considered in the context of interdependence.

The second and third parts of this volume are comprised of chapters that describe how empirical work has tested and extended a different aspect of IT. Specifically, people who are interdependent have outcomes that are affected by their partners' actions. As a result, partners who cooperate with each other have the potential to achieve greater outcomes than they could have as individuals, as they can combine time and resources. However, depending on others also creates vulnerabilities, particularly with others who are not caring or responsive to a person's needs. The second part of this volume is titled "Interdependence, Security, and Risk." Four chapters explore how interdependence can be a source of interpersonal security, but it also increases the risk of being rejected, hurt, or devalued by others.

In Chapter 5, Hunt, Kumashiro, and Arriaga detail how interdependent situations can influence attachment security. Some situations may activate a sense of risk and require benevolent and skilled partners to buffer insecurities. Other situations may foster a sense of worthiness or comfort with closeness and trust toward others. In that way, people learn about the risks of interdependence through being interdependent with others. In their chapter, the authors describe the Attachment Security Enhancement Model, which details how and when new experiences with risk cause people to update their expectations going forward.

In Chapter 6, Jakubiak notes that there are at least two sources of insecurity associated with close relationships: (1) those originating from the nature of interdependence itself and (2) those originating from stressors outside of the relationship. These risks are especially salient for individuals who exhibit chronic attachment insecurities. They benefit from situations in which partners can mitigate the sense of risk, facilitate continued interdependence, and encourage each other to thrive. Readers will benefit from learning about the types of supportive and affectionate partner behavior that promote security, which are crucial in understanding how interdependent processes can help partners mitigate these risks and encourage exploration.

In Chapter 7, Nakamura, Simpson, and Overall delve deeper into the association between how salient risks are to interdependent partners and what each partner can do to mitigate the perception of these risks for each other. Specifically, they detail some of the ways in which partners can successfully buffer the insecure reactions of anxious and avoidant individuals, including when, how, and why these ways work. These buffering strategies could help those for whom the risks of interdependence are especially salient to develop and maintain more "secure" environments.

Closing this part with Chapter 8, Rauch-Anderegg and Randall consider that partners' experiences of stress and coping are interdependent – one

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partner's stress affects the other, as does how they cope with stress. As such, dyadic coping (i.e., a joint means of regulating own and each other's emotional experiences) could be a particularly useful type of coping for stress that occurs in the context of relationships. Readers interested in interdependent processes associated with stress will benefit from reading the theoretical rationale for dyadic coping, as well as reviewing two recent empirical examples offered.

The third part of this volume, titled "Interdependence, Goal Pursuit, and Person Factors," contains four chapters that focus on the other half of the reward-risk theme of IT: the rewarding outcomes people receive as part of an interdependent unit depend on their personalities and levels of cooperation with their partners. In Chapter 9, Hadden and Girme recognize the complex nature of how interdependence affects individuals' ability to achieve their personal goals. Are personal and relational goals inherently antagonistic? Or might they be considered complementary? By providing an organizing structure in approaching this question, the literature that appears divided becomes clear: Relationships thrive when both personal and relational needs align. However, the alignment of personal and relational needs is dependent on multiple factors related to the goals, the partners, and the interaction that they describe.

In Chapter 10, Lemay extends the IT notion that the quality of interactions and relationships depends on the thoughts and feelings of both partners. He notes that people often try to manage the thoughts and feelings others have about them, and that adopting the goal to be valued by others often motivates people to enact prosocial behaviors. Demonstrating the power of interdependence, however, Lemay summarizes a wealth of research that suggests whether people do actually engage in prosocial behavior depends on whether they perceive others would value them for doing so.

In Chapter 11, Mattingly, Tomlinson, and McIntyre provide an overview of the self-expansion model through the lens of IT. The Self-Expansion Model holds that, because people form interdependent units with each other, people's senses of self are inherently connected to others' selves. This model is inherently compatible with IT, in that it is through interdependence with another person that one's sense of self changes. For example, individuals in an interdependent relationship may come to view their partners' traits (both good and bad) as if they are their own. Readers of this chapter will learn about the recent empirical developments in the self-expansion literature and how they are related to, and extend, IT.

Closing the part, in Chapter 12, Cortes and Wood detail an important process in which self-esteem and related personality traits influence whether people are able to achieve the benefits of having a close interpersonal bond (e.g., comfort, support). Specifically, people with low self-esteem generally feel

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that their partners are less accepting and responsive to them, which hinders their ability to achieve the positive outcomes of interdependence and cooperation. Throughout their chapter, the authors describe situations in which self-esteem affects perceptions of partner responsiveness to the detriment of those with low self-esteem.

In the final part of this volume, titled "Interdependence, Timing, and Expectations," we note that whereas IT in its original form certainly acknowledges history and future as important, its primary empirical focus is on specific, in-the-moment interactions. More recent IT work has extended this to be more explicitly longitudinal, looking at how people come to be ready for interdependence, what they expect will occur as a result of it, how they develop it, and what trajectories of interdependence may exist. The final part provides four chapters of contemporary work on these time-relevant topics.

In Chapter 13, Agnew, Hadden, and Tan postulate that timing matters in romantic relationships, as it does in all areas of life. More specifically, at any given moment in life, a person can be said to be receptive to a relationship in so far as they (a) want to be in a romantic relationship (termed relationship desirability) and (b) feel ready to be in a romantic relationship (termed relationship readiness). In their chapter, the authors detail Relationship Receptivity Theory, which demonstrates how classic IT constructs – constructs such as relational cognitions, emotions, motivations, behaviors, and outcomes – are influenced by how receptive an individual is to a relationship at a given time.

In Chapter 14, Baker, McNulty, Brady, and Montalvo summarize a substantive and important extension to IT. When predicting important relationship outcomes, the authors demonstrate the value of not only looking at how the relationship is now, as IT has always done, but also looking at how partners expect it to change in the future. The authors identify factors (e.g., plans to improve the relationship, personality, gender) that may cause partners' expected experiences to diverge from their current experiences, review theoretical and empirical work suggesting that expectations are uniquely important, and introduce a new measure of expected relationship satisfaction, alternatives, and investments designed for future research into these ideas.

In Chapter 15, Rice and Ogolsky review research on trajectories in relationships, asserting that there are countless pathways to commitment which vary by individual, relational, and contextual factors. It is important to examine the development of commitment across time, as it is key to understanding the outcomes interdependent partners receive (i.e., why some relationships end, some progress, and others cycle). To this end, the authors consider the role of expectations in the development of commitment, including how they are influenced by historical and social contexts. Readers will benefit from their methodological and analytical suggestions to study the trajectories of commitment effectively.

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Finally, in the closing chapter, Chapter 16, Sprecher provides a thorough methodological and theoretical primer on how interdependence can be created in a laboratory, and what outcomes are associated with closeness. Although there are undeniably limitations in the degree to which findings from laboratory-generated interdependence can generalize to real-world interdependent relationships, creating interdependence in a laboratory can allow researchers to test various theoretically important variables in a controlled setting. Readers who are interested in narrowing in on how interdependence itself affects interpersonal interactions will benefit from this thorough, data-driven analysis.

Collectively, these sixteen chapters represent a wide and impressive foray into current IT perspectives and applications. Classic IT was formulated over half a century ago, yet it has demonstrated remarkable longevity across changing social contexts. Part of its longevity can be attributed to the fact that its originators proposed a minimal theory that precisely defined the characteristics of individuals and situations that produce particular outcomes (Thibaut & Kelley, 1959). As those change, the theory is expected to adapt as well (e.g., conflict itself does not cause any exact outcomes; however, conflict between two individuals with specific, measurable personalities in a context with particular, measurable structural constraints will reliably predict consistent outcomes). Another cause for its longevity, however, can be attributed to the fact that contemporary scholars have seen the value in extending this theory. Throughout this volume, readers will see the breadth of extensions made to IT.

It is valuable to explicitly reflect on the types of extensions that have occurred. Whereas IT has always recognized the power of a situation, contemporary scholars are becoming more and more explicit in their recognition that perhaps even more important is the power of what a person makes of a situation. In line with this contemporary extension, many of our chapters explicitly address how people think about the interdependent situations they encounter and what effect their cognitions have on their behavioral choices. Specifically, as described previously, the opening part provides four chapters that do just this (Chapters 1–4).

In addition, the field of relationship science is embracing more and more meta-theory – the combining of theoretical perspectives to more fully explain common relationship phenomena. In this volume, there are chapters explicitly dedicated to extending IT by drawing these connections. We see the strongest evidence of this move toward meta-theory in chapters that connect IT with attachment theory (Chapters 5 and 7), and self-theories (Chapters 10–12). In addition, we present chapters that present social psychological perspectives on what interdependence is (Chapters 1 and 2), as well as those that present sociological perspectives (Chapters 3 and 4), clinical psychological applications (Chapter 8), and life history approaches (Chapters 13

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and 15). Collectively, the diversity of topics, author expertise, and connections drawn in the chapters that follow depict how rich and fruitful meta-theoretical approaches to relationship science are.

Finally, many of the chapters in the volume embrace the current era of methodological and statistical advancement and extend the more theoretical elements of IT to make them explicitly measurable. We present chapters depicting the myriad different methodological choices available to close relationship scholars, including experimental designs (Chapter 16), trajectory tracking (Chapter 15), self-report measures (Chapter 14), archival research (Chapter 4), and momentary assessments (Chapter 1). The importance of methods and statistics to relationship scientists is evident even in chapters not explicitly dedicated to method and statistical topics, as it sets the backdrop for how the theories were built and the findings obtained throughout this volume.

It is also valuable to explicitly reflect on the types of extensions that are likely to occur in the future. The time since Thibaut and Kelley's first seminal work has been one of rapid methodological and statistical advance. Techniques for statistically modelling context and dependence are now well-established, allowing for sophisticated treatments of entire life spaces. These spaces span time (e.g., as described in Sprecher's chapter on how closeness builds temporally, or in Agnew and colleagues chapter on how people are more or less ready for commitment at various times), place (e.g., an example of which is contained in Chopik's chapter on geographical mapping), and interaction partners (e.g., as is alluded to in most chapters, but especially in Nakamura and colleagues' chapter on how partners influence each others' attachment security). One example of the kinds of outcomes we can expect from this additional sophistication is summarized by Columbus and colleagues, in Chapter 1, when they describe research measuring how strongly those in interdependent relationships' interests and power correspond. Whereas previous generations of research on interdependent processes hypothesized about the dimensions of interdependence (e.g., mutuality of dependence), current generations have the tools to actually measure those dimensions and assess the contributors and outcomes of them. This will allow for IT to expand in scope, from predominately being valuable in characterizing interdependent relationships, to being omniscient regarding the future of those interdependent relationships.

The behavioral sciences have not only advanced methodologically since Thibaut and Kelley's first IT writings, but they have also advanced theoretically. Other theories of human behavior and relationships have flourished, and now scholars are in the nascent phases of integrating these theories. In this volume, examples of this abound. For example, Hunt and colleagues examine how interdependence constructs explain change in attachment style, Mattingly and colleagues write about how interdependence can contribute to self-expansion goals, and Lemay describes how interdependent goals can shape

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prosocial behavior. This is truly a remarkable moment for relationship science; theories originating from diverse perspectives and built by unaffiliated scholars can easily be woven together and empirically tested using common methods. It is thus safe to say that a paradigm now exists in relationship science. That is, we now have a shared constellation of beliefs, values, and techniques that allow for those from diverse theoretical perspectives to converge on core tenets. Going forward with a paradigm, the focus of relationship scientists is likely to shift. Prior to now, research has been focused on examining fundamentals (e.g., do people have stable attachment styles? How do interdependent partners weigh the risks and rewards of interdependence?). Now, research is likely to turn its attention toward assuming these fundamentals as true and using them to solve puzzles (e.g., how do relationships stay satisfying over time?).

Collectively, this volume combines chapters from an accomplished set of scholars spanning scientific disciplines. It is our hope that organizing and reflecting on the manner in which Interdependence Theory core themes have been extended and applied can inform future research on interdependent processes and serve as a reminder of the overwhelming power of relationships, interaction, and interdependence.

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PART I

INTERDEPENDENCE, SITUATIONS, AND CONTEXT

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1

Situations in Close Relationships

SIMON COLUMBUS, FRANCESCA RIGHETTI, AND DANIEL BALLIET

Imagine Ahmed and Bouke, generally a happy couple – just their musical tastes don't match: While Ahmed prefers classical music, Bouke is more into electronica. On a particular evening, our couple feel like relaxing at home. If both were to turn on their music, there would be a cacophony that would make neither happy, so a quiet apartment could be an acceptable compromise. Still, Ahmed might be happier if he put on a rendition of a Beethoven symphony, and Bouke may not be too pained by it. Bouke's favorite Venetian Snares, in contrast, would quickly drive Ahmed out of the house.

Interdependence Theory has arisen from thinking about these types of situations partners experience together in close relationships (Kelley & Thibaut, 1978; Kelley et al., 2003; Thibaut & Kelley, 1959). Its analysis focuses on how the structure of the situation determines each partner's outcomes – their tangible and psychological costs and benefits. The theory identifies four dimensions of interdependence: mutual dependence (the degree to which partners control each other's outcomes), the basis of interdependence (whether interdependence arises from social exchange – i.e., each partner controlling the other's outcomes – or from the need for coordination on joint action), conflict of interests (the degree to which one partner's gain is the other partner's loss), and power (the degree to which one partner has more control over their counterpart's outcomes than vice-versa). In addition, two dimensions index uncertainty: information certainty (the degree to which people are certain or uncertain about the consequences of their own and the other's actions in the situation) and future interdependence (the degree to which behavior in the current situation influences interdependence in future situations) (Kelley et al., 2003).

In this chapter, we focus on mutual dependence, conflict of interests, and power. Analyzing our example along these three dimensions tells us that

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