

Chapter 1:

The Self in Relationships: An Introduction¹

Synopsis: In this chapter, we delve into Kurt Lewin's field theory as an overarching framework for conceptualizing the self and the psychological environment (including significant others) as interrelated aspects of individuals' life space; we consider individuals' potential exercise of self-control via conflict-reducing behaviors within close relationships; we comment upon Thibaut and Kelley's interdependence theory as a major Lewin-inspired theory within relationship science (notwithstanding its frequent use of personality-friendly terminology that actually refers to social-psychological, rather than individual-difference, phenomena); we provide an overview of the present book (including a list of the major sections); and we offer a prelude to Chapter 2, which covers Sullivan's interpersonal theory of personality as an additional Lewin-inspired theory, albeit distinctive in its focus on self-esteem as an outcome of individuals' experience of (low) interpersonal anxiety over the long term.

...Nothing helps a child more than being able to express hostile and jealous feelings candidly, directly, and spontaneously, and there is no parental task more valuable, I believe, than being able to accept with equanimity such expressions of filial piety as "I hate you, mummy" or "Daddy, you're a beast." By putting up with these outbursts we show our children that we are not afraid of hatred and that we are confident it can be controlled; moreover, we provide for the child the tolerant atmosphere in which self-control can grow.

- John Bowlby,

¹NOTE: This chapter appears in Gaines, S. O., Jr. (2023), *The self in relationships: Social-personality theory, research, and new directions* (Oxford University Press), deposited with permission from Oxford University Press.

The Making and Breaking of Affectional Bonds (1979/2005, pp. 19-20)

Within parent-offspring relationships, not every parent is equally adept at providing a *secure base* (Ainsworth, 1969) for his or her son or daughter (Bowlby, 1988/2005).

Nevertheless, as the preceding quote from Bowlby (1979/2005) illustrates, one of the most important functions that a parent can fulfill is to “be there” emotionally when his or her offspring is distressed – even when the offspring expresses negative emotions toward the parent along the way (see J. Holmes, 2001/2004). Furthermore, by displaying restraint in the midst of receiving negativity from his or her own offspring, the parent not only promotes the development of a positive working model of other in the mind of the offspring (Dozier & Bernard, 2021) but also models conflict-resolution behavior that may serve the offspring well in a variety of close relationships that do not necessarily involve the parent (R. A. Thompson, Berlin, & J. A. Simpson, 2021). In turn, throughout childhood and beyond, the offspring may take the parent’s implicit and explicit conflict-resolution messages to heart when interacting with significant others (Allen, 2021). One overarching message may be that offspring need not forsake their need for emotional intimacy in the process of exercising self-control (Marvin, Britner, & B. S. Russell, 2016).

Given the primacy of parent-offspring relationships as influences on individuals’ social and personality development within Bowlby’s (1969/1997, 1973/1998, 1980/1998) *attachment theory*, it is not surprising that Bowlby’s (1979/2005) quote alludes to the complementarity between the parent’s caregiving system and the offspring’s attachment system, *during the offspring’s childhood* (Hazan & Shaver, 1994a, b). However, the offspring’s journey from childhood to adulthood is likely to be accompanied by the dual realization that (1) significant others (including immediate and extended family members, but especially friends and romantic partners) also need attachment over time; and (2) the offspring himself or herself will be increasingly placed in the position of caregiver over time

(Mikulincer & Shaver, 2012; Shaver & Mikulincer, 2012). In any event, Bowlby's attachment theory suggests that individuals' development of self-control within their earliest relationships with parents and other caregivers can help enable individuals to attain a stable (yet adaptable), coherent (yet multifaceted) sense of self across relationship contexts and across time (Shaver & Mikulincer, 2011). As individuals progress toward the end of life's journey, the maintenance of self-control may become particularly salient within intact relationships (Antonucci, 1994).

The present book is not intended to be a treatise on Bowlby's (1969/1997, 1973/1998, 1980/1998) attachment theory *per se*, given that excellent authored books already provide comprehensive coverage of Bowlby's theory as applied to adult relationships (most notably Mikulincer & Shaver, 2007a, 2016). By the same token, Bowlby's (1979/2005) quote from the beginning of the present chapter arguably represents one of the most eloquent statements that one will find in print concerning the adaptiveness of self-control within close relationships (whether interacting with offspring or interacting with other persons who may not be quite as dependent upon individuals as providers of emotional intimacy), regardless of one's theoretical perspective (see Steele, 2010, regarding the eclectic nature of the 1956 lecture that eventually served as Chapter 1 for Bowlby's 1979/2005 book). More generally, Bowlby's comments regarding the interpersonal ramifications of self-control are consistent with the predominant theme in the present book that *understanding various manifestations of the self can help relationship researchers account for substantial variance in individuals' behavior toward significant others* – a theme that surfaces repeatedly in research on *conflict resolution behaviors* within close relationships (Rusbult, 1993).

A Conceptual Starting Point: Lewin's Field Theory

According to Kurt Lewin's (1951/1976) *field theory*, individuals' behavior is a function of individuals' *life space*, which comprises "the person and the psychological environment as it exists for [that person]" (p. 57). Although Lewin has been hailed as a "master of social psychology" (Schellenberg, 1978), Lewin's emphasis on individual-difference variables within the life space – including unstable aspects of personality (e.g., moods) alongside stable or dispositional aspects of personality (e.g., motives) – simultaneously distinguishes field theory as a classic theory of personality (Hall & Lindzey, 1970). Although one will not find an explicit definition of *self* within field theory, one might contend that Lewin's construct of *person* (i.e., "the more complex, higher order processes that are responsive to the broad patterning of the geo-behavioral environment and that generate individual differences in response to it"; Kelley, 1991, p. 232) implicitly defines the self. In the Preface of the present book, we cited Baumeister's (1997) definition of the self; we propose a working definition of self as *individuals' experience as separate from, yet interconnected with, various aspects of their social and physical environments* (based on Gaines, 2016/2018) that integrates Lewin's and Baumeister's respective views.

Just as Lewin's (1951/1976) field theory lacks an explicit definition of the self, so too does Lewin's theory lack an overt definition of the *self-concept*. In *The Conceptual Representation and the Measurement of Psychological Forces*, Lewin (1938/2013) did refer briefly to *self-consciousness* as a possible mediator of "the effect of a psychological force on locomotion" (p. 98). However, that acknowledgement is not accompanied by further commentary; and it is not clear whether readers should regard self-consciousness as more versus less important than "language defects" or "a broken leg" as a mediator(!). Notwithstanding the importance of language defects or a broken leg to individuals' personalities and behavior, the executive-function aspect of self-consciousness or self-concept in mediating personality-behavior covariance is not addressed within Lewin's field

theory (see Baumeister, 1998, regarding the pivotal role of the self-concept in maintaining individuals' selfhood). Keeping in mind Baumeister's (1997) attempts to define self-concept (as noted in the Preface to the present book), we offer a working definition of the self-concept as *individuals' reflection upon their experience as separate from, yet interconnected with, various aspects of their social and physical environments* (based on Gaines, 2016/2018), thus incorporating Baumeister's perspective.

Finally, like the constructs of self and self-concept, Lewin's (1951/1976) field theory does not define *self-esteem*. Tesser (2000) cited Lewin's *A Dynamic Theory of Personality* (1935) in support of the view that individuals' resumption of work on tasks following interruption by experimenters provides insight into individuals' maintenance of self-esteem, although a careful reading of Lewin's book does not uncover any allusion to self-esteem. In any event, Tesser inferred that individuals' willingness to (1) undertake a task, (2) endure distractions from that task, and (3) re-engage with the task when permitted to do so illustrates individuals' goal strivings – not just to complete tasks that experimenters have assigned to them, but also to fulfill their own need for esteem – an inference that requires a leap of faith for readers but could be construed as consistent with Lewin's view on the antecedents of success (see also McClelland, 1985/1987). With Baumeister's (1997) definition of self-esteem in mind (as cited in the Preface of the present book), we submit a working definition of self-esteem as *the thoughts and feelings that result from individuals' reflection upon their experience as separate from, yet interconnected with, various aspects of their social and physical environments* (based on Gaines, 2016/2018), thus channelling Baumeister.

Self-Control of Behavior following Within- and Between-Person Conflict

Now that we have defined the term “self,” let us consider individuals' self-control of behavior following *conflict*, which Lewin (1935) defined as “the opposition of approximately

equally strong field forces” (p. 88). Lewin regarded the term *psychological field* as interchangeable with *life space* (as noted earlier in the present chapter, encompassing person and psychological environment). Thus, conflict may occur (1) within individuals, (2) between individuals in the same group, and (3) between groups (at least one of which may include the individuals in question; Schellenberg, 1978). Although Lewin commented at length upon intergroup conflict in *Resolving Social Conflicts* (1948/1967), we shall confine our review to Lewin’s writings on intra-individual and inter-individual conflict (e.g., as emphasized in *Field Theory in Social Science: Selected Theoretical Papers*; Lewin, 1951/1976). We note in passing that the topic of *interethnic relationships* (i.e., ongoing interactions, characterized by high levels of interdependence, between individuals who are members of different racial, religious, and/or national groups) lends itself well to the exploration of overlap between interpersonal conflict and intergroup conflict but is so under-researched that we would not be able to reach many firm conclusions (Gaines, 2017/2018).

When reading Lewin’s (1935, 1948/1967, 1951/1976) field theory, one is struck by the extent to which Lewin emphasizes the interior world of young children – not in terms of emotional intimacy with caregivers (as one would expect from the attachment theory of Bowlby, 1969/1997, 1973/1998, 1980/1998), but rather in terms of children’s success versus failure in reconciling their own “approach” and “avoidance” motives (McClelland, 1985/1987). Such reconciliation is complicated by the prospects of competing “approach” motives or competing “avoidance” motives within children, in addition to the expected conflicts between an “approach” motive and an “avoidance” motive that children may need to resolve within a particular situation (Hall & Lindzey, 1970). From Lewin’s vantage point, parents – and, more often than not, *mothers* – seem almost oblivious to their offspring’s need for emotional intimacy; resulting analyses of social interactions within field theory tend to focus on parents’ giving versus denial of rewards and costs that do not necessarily involve

love or affection (somewhat akin to the perspective of operant reinforcement theory; Skinner, 1938). In the end, children are left largely to their own devices to summon the self-control that is required to get what they want from their psychological environment (Schellenberg, 1978).

In the process of shifting his attention from parent-offspring relationships to adult marital relationships, Lewin (1935, 1948/1967, 1951/1976) noted that adults' experience of selfhood is more complex in its own right *and* is more clearly distinct from adults' experience of the psychological environment within their life space, compared to children's experience of selfhood (Hall & Lindzey, 1970). Consequently, Lewin's field theory deals with (1) the intra-individual conflict of husbands (or, more generally, Partner A), (2) the intra-individual conflict of wives (or more generally, Partner B), and (3) the inter-personal conflict that arises between the partners during everyday social interaction (Kelley, 1991). In their major revision of *interdependence theory* (Thibaut & Kelley, 1959), Kelley and Thibaut (1978) highlighted Lewin's dyadic approach to conflict in adult relationships, viewing intra-personal and inter-personal conflict as resulting primarily from clashes over conscious goal strivings (instead of clashes over unconscious motives; Van Lange & Balliet, 2015). Nevertheless, according to Lewin's field theory as well as Kelley and Thibaut's interdependence theory, individuals' exercise of self-control over their own behavior remains crucial in the de-escalation of conflict, within and between persons (Agnew & VanderDrift, 2015).

Conceptualizing Between-Person Conflict Resolution Behaviors

In a chapter on conflict resolution in close relationships, Rusbult (1993) identified *responses to relationship dissatisfaction* (Rusbult, Zembrodt, & Gunn, 1982) as one interrelated set of behaviors that individuals might pursue in order to de-escalate versus escalate interpersonal as well as intrapersonal conflict. Inspired by Hirschmann's (1970)

exit-voice-loyalty typology of individuals' responses to organizational decline, Rusbult et al. distinguished among four responses to conflict resolution: (1) *Exit* (active, destructive behavior); (2) *voice* (active, constructive behavior); (3) *loyalty* (passive, constructive behavior); and (4) *neglect* (passive, destructive behavior). Following the logic of interdependence theory (Thibaut & Kelley, 1959) as revised by Kelley and Thibaut (1978), Rusbult and colleagues reasoned that most individuals are capable of refraining from acting in their self-interest over the short term (i.e., opting to “cut bait”), instead acting in a manner that promotes their relationships over the long term (i.e., continuing to “fish”; VanderDrift & Agnew, 2020). Rusbult et al.'s construct of responses to dissatisfaction highlights one set of self-controlling behaviors that individuals may enact in situations where no one necessarily is to blame for current relationship difficulties (see Columbus, Righetti, & Balliet, 2020).

In addition to responses to relationship dissatisfaction, Rusbult (1993) identified *accommodation following anger or criticism by partners* (Rusbult, Verette, Whitney, Slovik, & Lipkus, 1991) as an interrelated set of behaviors that individuals might pursue in order to de-escalate versus escalate interpersonal as well as intrapersonal conflict. Unlike responses to relationship dissatisfaction, accommodation occurs in response to particular situations in which individuals have experienced hostility from their partners (Rusbult & Buunk, 1993). Furthermore, given that individuals may experience such direct negativity from their partners as unwarranted, the resulting internal conflict for individuals may be especially high; this “accommodative dilemma” places individuals in the position of deciding whether to turn the other cheek, rather than simply fish or cut bait (Berscheid, 1994). Nonetheless, the exit-voice-loyalty-neglect (EVLN) typology that Rusbult and colleagues (e.g., Rusbult, Zembrodt, & Gunn, 1982) had applied to responses to dissatisfaction likewise can be applied to accommodation following partners' anger/criticism (Rusbult, Drigotas, & Verette, 1994).

Overall, accommodation clearly qualifies as a self-controlling behavior in situations where the individuals' partners are to blame (Berscheid, 2010).

At the time that Rusbult's (1993) chapter on conflict resolution in close relationships was published, Rusbult and colleagues had not undertaken research on *forgiveness following betrayal by partners* (Finkel, Rusbult, Kumashiro, & Hannon, 2002). In a subsequent review article, Rusbult and Van Lange (2003) identified forgiveness as a third interrelated set of behaviors that individuals might pursue in order to de-escalate versus escalate interpersonal as well as intrapersonal conflict. Given that betrayal undermines individuals' *relational trust* (see Jones, Couch, & Scott, 1997), one might expect forgiveness to present even more challenges for individuals than does accommodation (for a discussion of the importance of relational trust to close relationships, see Kelley, J. G. Holmes, Kerr, Reis, Rusbult, & van Lange, 2003). However, betrayal as operationalized by Rusbult and colleagues has focused on partners' norm-violating behaviors that stop short of the worst-case scenario that "betrayal" brings to mind (i.e., sexual infidelity; e.g., Hannon, Rusbult, Finkel, & Kumashiro, 2010). All in all, using the EVLN typology, Rusbult and colleagues concluded that forgiveness reflects self-controlling behavior in situations where individuals' partners are to blame (see also Raj & Wiltermuth, 2016).

A Social-Psychological Aside: "Investment Model" Variables as Influences on Conflict Resolution Behaviors

Probably the most influential, empirically supported model to emerge directly from the tradition of Thibaut and Kelley's (1959; Kelley, 1979; Kelley & Thibaut, 1978) interdependence theory and indirectly from the tradition of Lewin's (1935, 1948/1967, 1951/1976) field theory is Caryl Rusbult's (1980) *investment model*, which proposes that *commitment* (i.e., individuals' conscious decision to remain in a particular close relationship)

reflects the influence of no fewer than three social-psychological variables: (1) *Satisfaction* (i.e., individuals' experience of a preponderance of rewards over costs within the relationship), (2) *perception of alternatives to the relationship* (i.e., individuals' belief that being with someone else *or* being with no one else would be preferable to remaining in their current relationship), and (3) *investment size* (i.e., the extent to which individuals stand to lose resources that they have devoted to their relationship, if that relationship were going to end; see Finkel, Simpson, & Eastwick, 2017). Given our emphasis on individual differences in conflict resolution behaviors in the present book, we will provide a brief review of social-psychological, "investment model" influences (for more definitive reviews, see Kelley et al., 1983/2002, 2003).

We note that, when Rusbult and colleagues measured satisfaction, alternatives, and investment along with conflict resolution behaviors (e.g., Rusbult et al., 1982, 1991), the "investment model" variables were hypothesized as *predictors* (with satisfaction and investment as significant positive predictors, and with alternatives as a significant negative predictor, of voice and loyalty; the valences for all predictions were reversed for exit and neglect). However, when Rusbult et al. measured commitment alongside conflict resolution variables, the responses to *partners behaving badly* (i.e., accommodation and forgiveness; e.g., Finkel et al., 2002; Rusbult et al., 1991) were cast as *outcomes* of commitment; but the responses to partner-nonspecific dissatisfaction (e.g., Rusbult et al., 1982; Rusbult, Johnson, & Morrow, 1986a) were cast as *predictors* of commitment. In terms of results, satisfaction and commitment were more likely to be significantly associated with conflict resolution behaviors (and in the expected direction) than were alternatives or investment. However, commitment was not examined as an *outcome* of responses to partners behaving badly; and commitment was not examined as a *predictor* of responses to partner-nonspecific dissatisfaction (but see Rusbult & Buunk, 1993, regarding possible "feedback loops").

On the basis of field theory (Lewin, 1935, 1948/1967, 1951/1976) and interdependence theory (Kelley, 1979; Kelley & Thibaut, 1978. Thibaut & Kelley, 1959), we are not aware of any *a priori* reason to expect conflict resolution behaviors – whether operationalised as responses to partner-nonspecific dissatisfaction (e.g., Rusbult et al., 1982) or operationalized as responses to partners behaving badly (e.g., Finkel et al., 2002; Rusbult et al., 1991) – to serve as predictors of personality variables *at one point in time* (Gaines, 2016/2018). Nevertheless, we acknowledge that results of longitudinal research may uncover effects of conflict resolution behaviors enacted at one point in time, upon individuals’ personalities *at a later point in time* (not to mention effects upon individuals’ “investment model” variables at a later point in time; see Hill, 2019). In the present book, we will focus upon results of cross-sectional research in which personality variables have been examined as predictors of conflict resolution behaviors, combining summaries of previous analyses from several sets of studies (i.e., Rusbult, Johnson, & Morrow, 1986a, b; Rusbult, Morrow, & Johnson, 1987; Rusbult et al., 1991, Study 4; Rusbult, Zembrodt, & Iwaniszek, 1986) with new analyses from one additional set of studies (i.e., Gaines, 2021, Main Studies 1 & 2).

Commitment: A Motive that Influences Certain Conflict Resolution Processes(?)

So far, we have described commitment (e.g., as conceptualized and measured by Rusbult, Martz, & Agnew, 1998) as a consciously experienced, social-psychological construct. In much of the research by Rusbult and colleagues (e.g., Rusbult et al., 1991; Wieselquist, Rusbult, Foster, & Agnew, 1999), commitment is framed clearly as a social-psychological predictor of accommodation and other “pro-relationship” behaviors (assuming that conflict resolution behaviors such as accommodation promote relationship maintenance; see Dindia & Canary, 1993). However, in various reviews of their own work, Rusbult and colleagues (e.g., Rusbult & Agnew, 2010; Rusbult & Bunk, 1993; Rusbult & Van Lange, 2003) refer to commitment as a “motive” – a term that, within personality psychology, raises

the prospect of individual differences (Gaines, 2020). The issue is not simply semantic; Rusbult and colleagues have concluded that individual-difference variables – including adult attachment style (e.g., Hazan & Shaver, 1987), which some of Rusbult’s own previous studies had associated with accommodation (e.g., Gaines, Reis, Summer, Rusbult, Cox, M. O. Wexler, Marelich, & Kurland, 1997) – accounted for a small proportion of inter-individual variance in “pro-relationship behaviors,” *compared to commitment* (Gaines, 2016/2018).

In the present book, we shall adopt the working definition that a *motive* is individuals’ answer to the question, “What compels you to do what you do?” (with the caveat that individuals may not be aware of the impact that their own motives exert upon their behavior; Gaines, 2016/2018). Therefore, in our view, commitment as operationalized by Rusbult et al. (1998) does *not* qualify as a motive. However, we believe that commitment *might* qualify as a *goal* – which we shall define as individuals’ answer to the question, “What are you seeking to accomplish?” (inspired by McAdams & Olson, 2010) – that can mediate the impact of motives on accommodation (Rusbult et al., 1991), forgiveness (Finkel et al., 2002), and additional conflict resolution behaviors within close relationships (Crocker & Canevello, 2015). Indeed, Strachman and Gable (2006) postulated that commitment mediates the impact of individuals’ “approach” and “avoidance” motives upon individuals’ behavior in close relationships; such a distinction is not apparent from the writings of Rusbult and colleagues (e.g., Rusbult & Buunk, 1993). Then again, Strachman and Gable’s multidimensional conceptualization of commitment contradicts the argument by Rusbult et al. (e.g., Rusbult, Coolson, Kirchner, & Clarke, 2006) that commitment is a unidimensional construct.

One additional point regarding motives within Rusbult’s (1980) investment model is that – consistent with the broader interdependence theory as presented initially by Thibaut and Kelley (1959) and revised subsequently by Kelley and Thibaut (1978) – Rusbult’s model took it for granted that all human beings possess a *need for self-interest* (Crocker &

Canevello, 2015). Given that Rusbult and colleagues proceeded on the assumption of individual *similarities* in the self-interest need, it should come as no surprise that commitment and its social-psychological precursors (especially satisfaction) tended to receive priority over individual-difference variables when Rusbult et al. attempted to predict conflict resolution behaviors (e.g., Rusbult et al., 1991; Wieselquist et al., 1999). Crocker, Canevello, and A. A. Brown (2017) applied the term *selfishness motivation* to this oft-presumed “universal” need for self-interest (although, like Rusbult and colleagues, Crocker et al. have not always maintained a distinction between the terms “motive” and “goal”). At any rate, Crocker and colleagues have contended that (1) humans also possess a “universal” *otherishness motivation*; and (2) commitment as operationalized by Rusbult et al. can reflect selfishness *and* otherishness motives (see also Canevello & Crocker, 2015).

“Transformation of Motivation”: *Not* a Change in Stable Motives over Time

Perhaps the most striking example regarding the potential misuse of personality-related terminology within interdependence theory (Kelley, 1979; Kelley & Thibaut, 1978; Thibaut & Kelley, 1959) is the gradual adoption of the phrase *transformation of motivation* – a phrase that has been popularly associated with Lewin’s (1935, 1948/1967, 1951/1976) field theory, even though the phrase appeared around the same time within Gordon Allport’s (1937/1951, 1961/1963) *psychology of the individual* (which proposes that the construct of *trait* should be the predominant construct throughout personality psychology; Hall & Lindzey, 1970). According to Allport’s concept of *functional autonomy*, (1) not only are most of the prevailing motives underlying behavior during adulthood fundamentally different from most of the prevailing motives underlying behavior during childhood; but (2) formerly prevailing needs from childhood may be *extinguished* during adulthood (Bertocci, 1940). Therefore, within Allport’s psychology of the individual, “transformation of motivation” implies that the need for self-interest that individuals presumably possessed as children might

vanish during adulthood – surely not the scenario that interdependence theorists envision when they use the term (Karremans, Pronk, & van der Wal, 2015).

Some advocates of Allport's (1937/1951, 1961/1963) psychology of the individual have contended that "transformation of motivation" might be (re)interpreted as *sublimation* of motivation (e.g., Winter, 1997) – an interesting possibility for relationship scientists in general, given the implication that the need for self-interest may not be inherently adaptive (notwithstanding the argument that the self-interest motive is important to interpersonal attraction from acquaintanceship onward; e.g., Montoya & Horton, 2020). However, Allport had famously rejected Freudian motivation-related concepts, such as defense mechanisms (including sublimation; see Ewen, 1998). Moreover, for interdependence theorists in particular (following Kelley, 1979; Kelley & Thibaut, 1978; Thibaut & Kelley, 1959), the *psychic determinism* that is central to Freud's (1923/1927) psychoanalytic theory might seem like anathema to their Lewinian emphasis on the psychological environment as no less important (and possibly *more* important) than personality processes in shaping individuals' behavior (see Schellenberg, 1978). In any event, the need for self-interest does not appear to be one of the motives that individuals retain from childhood to adulthood within Allport's psychology of the individual (though the *need for esteem* survives the cut; Redfearn, 1983).

In all fairness to proponents of interdependence theory (Thibaut & Kelley, 1959) as revised by Kelley and Thibaut (1978), Lewin (1935/ 1948/1967, 1951/1976) *did* argue that the successful exercise of self-control might require that individuals either (1) refrain from acting upon their current goals (if not their motives), or (2) *change* their current goals (if not their motives; see Karniol & Ross, 1996). Assuming that goals are more consistently accessible to consciousness than are motives, one might reasonably expect that individuals are likely to find it easier to change goals (or, at least, refrain from acting upon goals) in comparison to motives (see Kuper, Modersitzki, Phan, & Rauthmann, 2021). If

interdependence theorists have such a well-delineated version of “transformation of motivation” in mind, then it might be worth amending the term to “transformation of *goals*” (Gaines, 2016/2018). Otherwise, interdependence theorists run the risk of conveying the inaccurate impression that motives as experienced by individuals in everyday life (and outside social-psychological experimental settings) are more malleable than actually is the case (Gaines, 2020).

Before We Proceed: Prospects for Individual Differences in Motives

Owing to the legacy of Lewin’s (1935, 1948/1967, 1951/1976) field theory and Kelley’s (1979; Kelley & Thibaut, 1978; Thibaut & Kelley, 1959) interdependence theory, Rusbult’s (1980) investment model does not offer much insight into the ways that individuals might differ in motives as stable, cross-situational dispositions (Gaines, 2016/2018). Probably the most systematic account of individual differences in motives within personality psychology can be found in Henry Murray’s (1938) *personology*, a psychodynamic theory that lists more than two dozen motives (although the *needs for power, intimacy, and achievement* have received the most attention from researchers over the years; McClelland, 1985/1987). Unlike most psychodynamic personality theories, personology assumes that most motives are acquired over time, rather than inborn (an assumption that may help explain the existence of individual differences in motives at a particular point in time; Ewen, 1998). By the same token, according to H. Murray’s theory, different situations that individuals encounter within their psychological environments on a daily basis – collectively known as *press* – will interact with motives to produce particular behavioral patterns or *thema* (Hall & Lindzey, 1970).

Both H. Murray’s (1938) personology and Lewin’s (1935) field theory acknowledge that individuals’ behavior reflects a complex interaction between within-person and outside-

person influences, although the two theories differ in their relative emphases (i.e., personology prioritizes the impact of motives as aspects of individuals' personalities; whereas field theory places equal or greater priority upon the impact of individuals' psychological environment as an aspect of the total environment; Rosenzweig, 1944). We do not wish to overstate the degree of overlap between H. Murray's personology and Lewin's field theory: Personology embraces the personality structure of id, ego, and superego that is a hallmark of Freud's (1923/1927) *psychoanalytic theory* and is implicated in personality and behavior from childhood; whereas field theory focuses on individuals' immediate past, without invoking a particular structure of personality (Hall & Lindzey, 1970). Nevertheless, modern-day readers might be surprised to discover the extent to which Lewin (1936) respected Freud's (1924) motive-oriented theoretical contributions to personality psychology, even though Lewin criticized Freud's single-case-oriented methodological innovations as unscientific (Schellenberg, 1978).

Kelley (1991) credited Lewin's (1935, 1948/1967, 1951/1976) field theory with providing much of the individual-difference and social-psychological foundation for Thibaut and Kelley's (1959, Kelley, 1979; Kelley & Thibaut, 1978) interdependence theory. For instance, both field theory and interdependence theory regard significant others as important actors within individuals' psychological environment, keeping in mind that individuals *and their partners* possess motives that may be communicated directly or indirectly within close relationships (Rusbult & Van Lange, 2003). However, Kelley (1997) looked primarily to McClintock's *game theory* (e.g., McClintock, 1972; McClintock & Liebrand, 1988) – especially McClintock's list of *social motives* (i.e., *own*, *relative*, *joint*, and *other gain maximization*) – for details regarding *which* motives were most likely to be reflected in individuals' behavior toward relationship partners. Unfortunately, neither field theorists nor interdependence theorists have focused on the effects of “social motives” upon individuals'

behavior within ongoing relationships (see Berscheid, 2010). Instead, field theorists and interdependence theorists alike have tended to infer motives from covariances among individuals' scores on purely social-psychological variables (see Finkel et al., 2017).

Overview of the Present Book

The main text of the present book is organised five sections that, hopefully, will enable readers to gain a clear understanding of the ways in which each chapter builds upon key conceptual and empirical points from the chapter(s) that preceded it:

(I) *Prologue*, consisting of a Preface (briefly acquainting readers with the subject matter of relationship science, including an ode to the attachment theory of Bowlby, 1969/1997); and Chapter 1: The Self in Relationships: An Introduction (identifying the field theory of Lewin, 1935, as a meta-theory that serves as a broad conceptual and methodological foundation for the rest of the book).

(II) *Conceptual Issues regarding the Self in Relationships*, consisting of Chapter 2: Self-Esteem (and Narcissism) as Reflected in Conflict Resolution Behaviors (identifying the interpersonal theory of Sullivan [1953] as an intellectual descendant of field theory that is relevant to research on self-esteem); Chapter 3: Gender-Related Traits as Reflected in Conflict Resolution Behaviors (identifying the feminine psychology of Horney [1967] as another “social-psychological” personality theory, alongside Sullivan’s interpersonal theory, that is relevant to research on gender-related traits); and Chapter 4: The “Big Five” Traits as Reflected in Conflict Resolution Behaviors (identifying the analytical psychology of Jung [1921/1971] and the factor-analytic trait theory of McCrae & Costa [2003/2006] as relevant to research on “universal” traits, with the latter theory informed by Spence’s [1993] multifactorial gender identity theory).

(III) *From Conceptual to Methodological Issues regarding the Self in Relationships*, consisting of Chapter 5: Conceptualization of Dominance and Nurturance as Interpersonal Traits (identifying Wiggins's [2003/2005] interpersonal circumplex theory as relevant to research on interpersonal traits, keeping in mind the lack of previously published research that might bear directly upon the implications of interpersonal traits for conflict resolution behaviors).

(IV) *Methodological Issues regarding the Self in Relationships*, consisting of Chapter 6: Measurement of Dominance and Nurturance as Interpersonal Traits I (applying geometric and psychometric analyses to actual data from Gaines, Panter, et al., 1997, Study 2; Hofsess & Tracey, 2005; Sodano & Tracey, 2006, Adult Sample; and DeYoung, Weisberg, Quilty, & Peterson, 2013, Sample 2), using the Interpersonal Adjective Scales-Revised version (IAS-R; Wiggins, Trapnell, & Phillips, 1988); Chapter 7: Measurement of Dominance and Nurturance as Interpersonal Traits II (applying geometric and psychometric analyses to actual data from Barford, Zhao, & Smillie, 2015; P. M. Markey & C. N. Markey, 2009, Study 1, Samples 1 & 2; and DeYoung et al., 2013, Sample 3), using the International Personality Item Pool-Interpersonal Circle (IPIP-IPC; P. M. Markey & C. N. Markey, 2009); and Chapter 8: Interpersonal Traits as Predictors of Accommodation (applying geometric and psychometric analyses to actual data from Gaines, 2021, Main Studies 1 & 2, using the IPIP-IPC alongside accommodation items based on Rusbult et al., 1991).

(V) *Epilogue*, consisting of Chapter 9, The Self in Relationships: Concluding Thoughts (addressing strengths and limitations of the studies for which new analyses were reported in Chapters 6 through 8); directions for future research and applications concerning the self in relationships, including summaries of preliminary findings that offer grounds for guarded optimism regarding the circumplexity of interpersonal motives as linked to the prediction of accommodation (Rusbult et al., 1991) on the basis of data from Gaines (2021,

Main Study 2) using the former Circumplex Scales of Interpersonal Values (Locke, 2000; re-interpreted by Locke, 2015); and a Postscript (returning briefly to the attachment theory of Bowlby [1969/1997]; with special attention given to the prospect of conceptualizing and measuring attachment orientations as interpersonal attitudes [Gaines, Carr, Gardner, Hodgins, Kyeyune, & Ruffell 2013], using a combination of the Experiences in Close Relationships Scale [ECR; Brennan, C. L. Clark, & Shaver, 1998] and the Relationship Scales Questionnaire [RSQ; Griffin & Bartholomew, 1994b]).

Prelude to Chapter 2

In *Principles of Topological Psychology*, Lewin (1936) elaborated upon his field theory (initially presented in book-length form by Lewin, 1935) by pointing the way toward a metaphorically mathematics-based approach within personality and social psychology (Back, 1992). Lewin was concerned primarily with the *psychological* space, rather than the physical space, that demarcates individuals from the psychological field within which they are situated (Skowron & Wojtowicz, 2021). To the extent that individuals have not succeeded in fulfilling their psychological needs or motives, individuals experience *tension*, or “a state of a region relative to that of another region” (Lewin, 1936, p. 175) within those individuals. The default response of individuals to tension, which is affective in nature (i.e., manifested in heightened levels of negative moods and emotions), is to try and exert increased self-control over their own behavior (Koch, 1941). However, given that part of individuals’ psychological environment frequently includes significant others, self-control is most likely to reduce individuals’ internal tension when the behavior results in conflict resolution (1) *within the individuals in question* and (2) *between the individuals and their partners* (who may or may not be experiencing comparable levels of tension; Burnes & Cooke, 2013).

Harry Stack Sullivan (1953, 1954, 1956) arguably was the first psychodynamically oriented personality theorist to embrace Lewin's (1935, 1948/1967, 1951/1976) field theory to an appreciable degree (Tubert-Oklander, 2007). Sullivan's interpersonal theory builds upon Lewin's field theory, even as it recasts the psychological field as an *interpersonal field* (Conci, 2013). According to Sullivan, even when individuals physically are alone, the social and psychological effects of previous interactions with significant others continue to reverberate through individuals' current patterns of behavior (and, one may infer, continue to shape individuals' personalities; Stern, 2013). In fact, Sullivan contended that individuals' experience of selfhood from birth onward cannot be understood properly without taking individuals' histories of interactions with significant others into account (Gaines, 2007a, b). Finally, Sullivan's interpersonal theory follows the lead of Lewin's field theory – which, in turn, follows the lead of Freud's (1921/1922) psychoanalytic theory – in highlighting the free-floating fear of *anxiety* as an important affective manifestation of tension (although Sullivan and other neo-Freudian, “social-psychological” personality theorists viewed anxiety as inherently *interpersonal*; Kanter, 2013).

To a greater extent than one finds within Lewin's (1935, 1948/1967, 1951/1976) field theory, Sullivan's (1953, 1954, 1956) interpersonal theory of addresses the implications of interpersonal anxiety for individuals' self-esteem over time (Cortina, 2020). Furthermore, interpersonal theory poses intriguing questions regarding the extent to which realistically high self-esteem (as distinct from *narcissism*, or individuals' inflated evaluation of themselves) enables individuals to reduce interpersonal anxiety within themselves by defusing conflict with their partners at a given point in time (see Kernis, 2003a, b). In turn, Sullivan's theory asserts that individuals' reduction of interpersonal anxiety within themselves (via conflict resolution behavior or other forms of “pro-relationship behavior”) may promote *felt security* as well as self-esteem within individuals over the long term (J. G.

Holmes, 2002). In Chapter 2, we shall consider interpersonal theory as a means toward understanding whether (and how) self-esteem and the possibly related construct of narcissism are manifested in individuals' conflict resolution behaviors toward significant others. Along the way, we shall learn that Sullivan's interpersonal theory is not limited in scope to the "good-me" and "bad-me" evaluations that constitute self-esteem (Cooper & Guynn, 2006).