

# This Week's Citation Classic

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**Bieri J, Atkins A L, Briar S, Leaman R L, Miller H & Tripodi T.** *Clinical and social judgment: the discrimination of behavioral information.* New York: Wiley, 1966. 271 p. [Dept. Psychol., Univ. Texas; Dept. Psychol., Yeshiva Univ., NY; School of Soc. Welfare, Univ. Calif., Berkeley; and Brooklyn Col., City Univ., NY]

**This book considers the judgment process in relation to two aspects of personality, the cognitive complexity of the judge and ability to process information. The relationship of these factors to phenomena of anchoring, situational influences, and affect, are discussed in the context of empirical research. [The Social Sciences Citation Index® (SSCI™) indicates that this book has been cited over 225 times since 1966.]**

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"The research reported in this book was an intensely collaborative effort and a product of a stimulating and creative research group that I was privileged to lead for six years at the Columbia University School of Social Work. Our work brought together two major currents at that time, information theory in experimental psychology, and clinical judgment in applied psychology. Both of these were integrated within a cognitive structure approach to personality functioning, specifically within the concept of cognitive complexity. The frequent citation of this volume is largely due to the discussion it contains of cognitive complexity, both in terms of theory and assessment methods. There is a continuing interest in cognitive complexity in clinical, personality, and social psychology, as well as in many applied fields such as education, child development, management, and business.

"I first published a paper on cognitive complexity in 1955,<sup>1</sup> in which I was setting forth ideas that had been stimulated by my graduate work with the late George A. Kelly in personal construct theory. The 50s and 60s were heady years for cognitive research and

it was natural to apply these ideas to the problem of clinical judgment. The extra ingredient, that of information theory, was provided when I struck up a friendship with a colleague at Columbia, an assistant professor named William J. McGill. Bill was later to become president of Columbia University, but in those days our talks centered around the application of information theory to clinical judgment. Bill had already made notable contributions to the development of information theory, and the many talks we had on this topic were very important to me. His influence and involvement in this book were substantial, and I wish to thank him again for his creative assistance in all phases of our research. "Ours was truly an interdisciplinary group. In addition to McGill, an experimental psychologist, and me, a clinical psychologist, my coauthors formed a varied and stimulating intellectual group. Robin Leaman had completed graduate work in perceptual psychology, and she acted as an integrator for all our efforts with her astute, insightful contributions. Alvin Atkins was trained in social psychology, while Scott Briar, Henry Miller, and Tony Tripodi were in social work. With the exception of Leaman, all the coauthors obtained doctorates under my supervision, and their efforts are fundamental in this book. Atkins is responsible for much of the work on anchoring effects, while Briar was concerned with situational influences on judgment. Both Miller and Tripodi had strong interests in the cognitive and information processing aspects of our work. This scholarly mix provided a fount of intellectual stimulation and personal friendship that was unmatched in my research work before or since that time. I believe our work and the interest it has generated underscores the fruitfulness of collaborative work across disciplines in today's increasingly compartmentalized intellectual world."

1. Bieri J. Cognitive complexity/simplicity and predictive behavior. *J. Abnorm. Soc. Psychol.* 51:263-68, 1955.