

This Week's Citation Classic

Bryan J H & Test M A. Models and helping: naturalistic studies in aiding behavior. *J. Personal. Soc. Psychol.* 6:400-7, 1967. [Northwestern University, Evanston, IL]

Four experiments concerned with helping behavior were conducted. Three addressed the effects of altruistic models upon helping, while one was concerned with the impact of the solicitor's race upon donations. [The Social Sciences Citation Index® (SSCI®) indicates that this paper has been cited over 130 times since 1967.]

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"The experiments reported in the article reflected my interest in the nature of altruistic or helping behaviors, an interest traceable to the trial of Adolf Eichmann. The trial of this agent of the holocaust apparently stimulated a speech by Rabbi Schulweiss which in turn prompted remembrances by the Christian rescuers of Jews, in addition to reflection upon the atrocities. Perry London of the University of Southern California then encouraged me to collaborate with him in the study of the Christians who had rescued Jews. David Rosenhan joined the collaborative efforts and addressed some of the variables associated with participation in the early freedom rides involving the desegregation of the South. One of the early hypotheses generated from what were mainly interview studies of rescuers and freedom riders was the importance of adult exemplars or models in affecting the participation of those who observe the

model.

"While Eichmann and Schulweiss indirectly, and London directly, affected the nature of my interest, another group of colleagues, all then located at Northwestern University, shaped the methodology employed. Webb, Campbell, Sechrest, and Schwartz were then in the midst of writing what now must be considered a classical book in psychology, *Unobtrusive Measures*.¹ There was considerable encouragement within the department to extend experiments and studies from the laboratory to other perhaps less esoteric settings. Mary Ann Test, then a graduate student, was particularly interested in naturalistically based studies and, in a sweet and gentle fashion, insisted that our work on helping be conducted in natural settings.

"In summary then, the topic addressed was altruism; the site of the experiments was outside the milieu of the psychologist. While only God knows, my guess as to factors contributing to the article's popularity involves both the topic and the experimental sites. The work on altruistic and helping behavior was rather sparse when the article was published but several social scientists from prestigious universities were involved in such work. Thus, Berkowitz and colleagues² and Latané and Darley³ had either published or were about to publish important works in the area. Additionally, the field would soon become increasingly enthusiastic, rightly or wrongly, about extending investigations from the laboratory to other settings. Our experiments simply, unwittingly, and luckily exploited two features of the Zeitgeist, one involving a substantive area, the other a methodology. For further work in the study of development of helping behavior see *Positive Social Behavior and Morality*"⁴

1. Webb E J, Campbell D T, Schwartz R D & Sechrest L. *Unobtrusive measures: nonreactive research in the social sciences*. Chicago: Rand McNally, 1966. 225 p.
2. Berkowitz L & Daniels L. Responsibility and dependency. *J. Abnormal Soc. Psychol.* 66:429-36, 1963.
3. Latané B & Darley J M. Social determinants of bystander intervention in emergencies. (Macaulay I & Berkowitz L, eds.) *Altruism and helping behavior*. New York: Academic Press, 1970. p. 13-28.
4. Staub E. *Positive social behavior and morality*. New York: Academic Press, 1979. Vol. 2.