Chapter 1
Introducing social psychology

Chapter contents

What do *you* think?

1 Would it ever be ethical to conceal the true purpose and nature of a psychology experiment from someone volunteering to take part?

2 How complete an explanation of social behaviour do you think evolution or neuroscience provides?

3 Social psychology texts often convey the impression that social psychology is primarily an American discipline. Do you have a view on this?

What is social psychology?

Social psychology
Scientific investigation of how people's thoughts, feelings and behaviour are influenced by the actual, imagined or implied presence of others.

Social psychology is 'the scientific investigation of how the thoughts, feelings and behaviours of individuals are influenced by the actual, imagined or implied presence of others' (G. W. Allport, 1954a, p. 5). What does this mean? What do social psychologists actually do, how do they do it and what do they study?

Social psychologists are interested in explaining *human* behaviour and generally do not study animals. Animal research sometimes identifies processes that generalise to people (e.g. social facilitation – **see Chapter 8**), and certain principles of social behaviour may be general enough to apply to humans and, for instance, other primates (e.g. Hinde, 1982). But, as a rule, social psychologists believe that the study of animals does not take us very far in explaining human social behaviour, unless we are interested in evolutionary origins (e.g. Neuberg, Kenrick, & Schaller, 2010; Schaller, Simpson, & Kenrick, 2006).

Behaviour
What people actually do that can be objectively measured.

Social psychologists study **behaviour** because behaviour can be observed and measured. Behaviour refers not only to obvious motor activities (such as running, kissing and driving) but also to more subtle actions such as a raised eyebrow, a quizzical smile or how we dress, and, critically important in human behaviour, what we say and what we write. In this sense, behaviour is publicly verifiable. However, behaviour serves a communicative function. What a behaviour means depends on the motives, goals, perspective and cultural background of the actor and the observer (**see Chapter 15**).

Social psychologists are interested not only in behaviour, but also in feelings, thoughts, beliefs, attitudes, intentions and goals. These are not directly observable but can, with varying degrees of confidence, be inferred from behaviour and may influence or even determine behaviour. The relationship between these unobservable processes and overt behaviour is in itself a focus of research; for example, in research on attitude–behaviour correspondence (**see Chapter 5**) and research on prejudice and discrimination (**see Chapter 10**). Unobservable processes are also the psychological dimension of behaviour, as they occur within the human brain. However, social psychologists almost always go one step beyond relating social behaviour to underlying psychological processes – they almost always map psychological aspects of behaviour onto fundamental cognitive processes and structures in the human mind and sometimes to neuro-chemical processes in the brain (**see Chapter 2**).

What makes social psychology *social* is that it deals with how people are affected by other people who are physically present (e.g. an audience – **see Chapter 8**) or who are imagined to be present (e.g. anticipating performing in front of an audience), or even whose presence is implied. This last influence is more complex and addresses the fundamentally social nature of our experiences as humans. For instance, we tend to think with words; words derive from language and communication; and language and communication would not exist without social interaction (**see Chapter 15**). Thought, which is an internalised and private activity that can occur when we are alone, is thus clearly based on implied presence. As another example of implied presence, consider that most of us do not litter, even if no one is watching and even if there is no possibility of ever being caught. This happens because people, as members of a society, have constructed and internalised a social convention or norm that proscribes littering. Such a norm implies the presence of other people and influences behaviour even in their absence (**see Chapters 7 and 8**).

Science
Method for studying nature that involves the collecting of data to test hypotheses.

Theory
Set of interrelated concepts and principles that explain a phenomenon.

Data
Publicly verifiable observations.

Social psychology is a **science** because it uses the scientific method to construct and test theories. Just as physics has concepts such as electrons, quarks and spin to explain physical phenomena, social psychology has concepts such as dissonance, attitude, categorisation and identity to explain social psychological phenomena. The scientific method dictates that no **theory** is 'true' simply because it is logical and seems to make sense. On the contrary, the validity of a theory is based on its correspondence with fact. Social psychologists construct theories from **data** and/or previous theories and then conduct empirical research, in which data are collected to test the theory (see 'Scientific method' and Figure 1.2).

Social psychology and its close neighbours

Social psychology sits at the crossroads of a number of related disciplines and subdisciplines (see Figure 1.1). It is a subdiscipline of general psychology and is therefore concerned with explaining human behaviour in terms of processes that occur within the human mind. It differs from individual psychology in that it explains *social* behaviour, as defined in the previous section. For example, a general psychologist might be interested in perceptual processes that are responsible for people overestimating the size of coins. However, a social psychologist might focus on the fact that coins have value (a case of implied presence, because the value of something generally depends on what others think), and that perceived value might influence the judgement of size. A great deal of social psychology is concerned with face-to-face interaction between individuals or among members of groups, whereas general psychology focuses on people's reactions to stimuli that do not have to be social (e.g. shapes, colours, sounds).
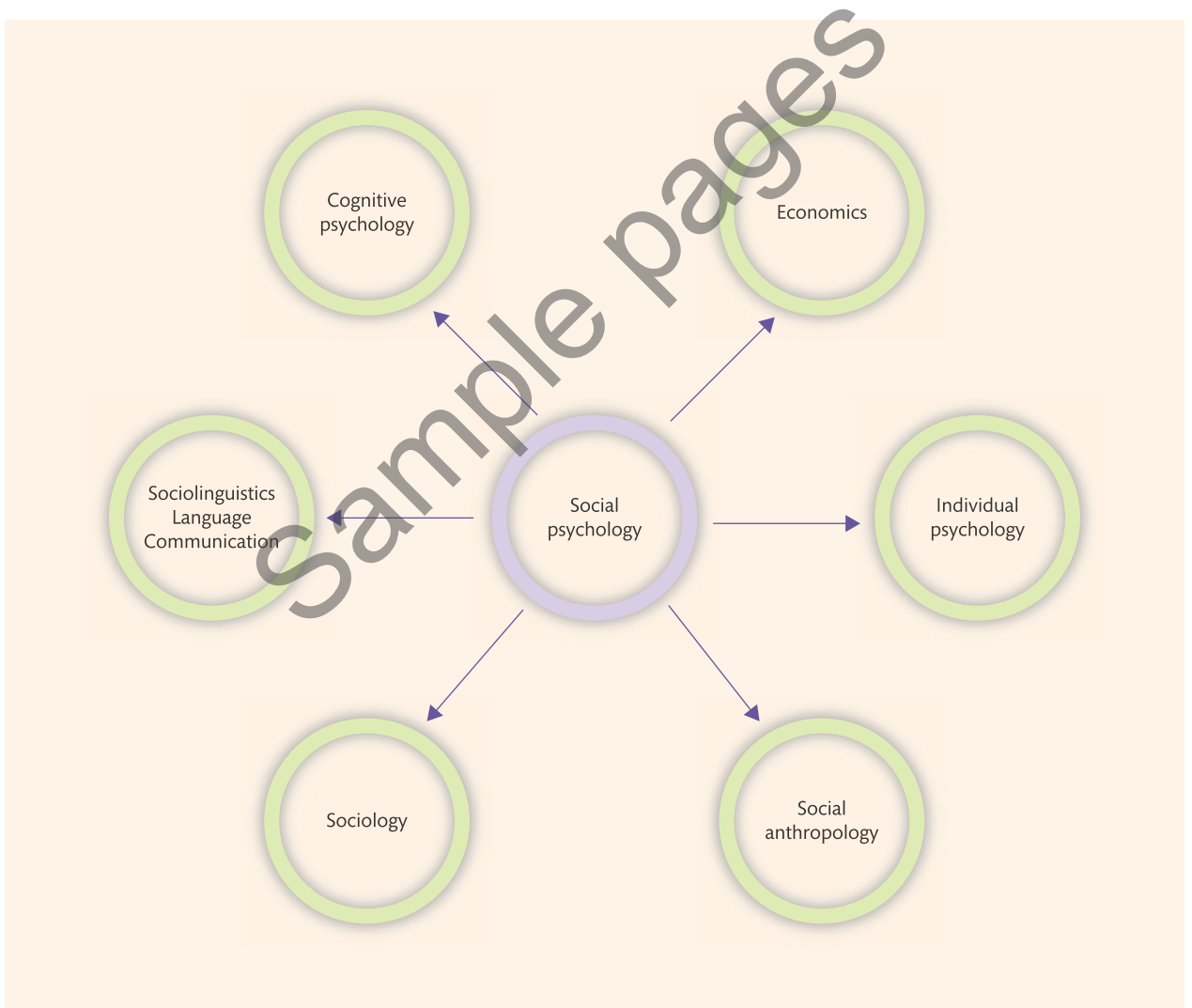

Figure 1.1 Social psychology and some close scientific neighbours

Social psychology draws on a number of subdisciplines in general psychology and has connections with other disciplines, mostly in the social sciences.

The boundary between individual and social psychology is approached from both sides. For instance, having developed a comprehensive and hugely influential theory of the individual human mind, Sigmund Freud set out, in his 1921 essay 'Group psychology and the analysis of the ego', to develop a social psychology. Freudian, or psychodynamic, notions have left an enduring mark on social psychology (Billig, 1976), particularly in the explanation of prejudice (**see Chapter 10**). Since the late 1970s, social psychology has been strongly influenced by cognitive psychology. It has employed its methods (e.g. reaction time) and its concepts (e.g. memory) to explain a wide range of social behaviours. Indeed, this approach to social psychology, called social cognition (**see Chapter 2**), is the dominant approach in contemporary social psychology (Fiske & Taylor, 2013; Moskowitz, 2005; Ross, Lepper, & Ward, 2010), and it surfaces in almost all areas of the discipline (Devine, Hamilton, & Ostrom, 1994). In recent years, neuroscience (the study of brain biochemistry; Gazzaniga, Ivry, & Mangun, 2013) has also influenced social psychology (Lieberman, 2010; Todorov, Fiske, & Prentice, 2011).

Social psychology also has links with sociology and social anthropology, mostly in studying groups, social and cultural norms, social representations, and language and intergroup behaviour. Sociology focuses on how groups, organisations, social categories and societies are organised, how they function and how they change. Social anthropology is much like sociology but historically has focused on 'exotic' societies (i.e. non-industrial tribal societies that exist or have existed largely in developing countries). In both cases, the level of explanation (i.e. the focus of research and theory) is the group as a whole rather than the individuals who make up the group. Sociology and social anthropology are *social sciences* whereas social psychology is a *behavioural science* – a disciplinary difference with profound consequences for how one studies and explains human behaviour.

Some forms of sociology (e.g. microsociology, psychological sociology, sociological psychology) are, however, closely related to social psychology (Delamater & Ward, 2013) – there is, according to Farr (1996), a sociological form of social psychology that has its origins in the *symbolic interactionism* of G. H. Mead (1934) and Herbert Blumer (1969). Social psychology deals with many of the same phenomena as social anthropology but focuses on how individual human interaction and human cognition influence 'culture' and, in turn, are influenced or constructed by culture (Heine, 2016; Smith, Bond, & Kağitçibaşi, 2006; **see Chapter 16**). The level of explanation is the individual person within the group.

Just as the boundary between social and individual psychology has been approached from both sides, so has the boundary between social psychology and sociology. From the sociological side, for example, Karl Marx's theory of cultural history and social change has been extended to incorporate a consideration of the role of individual psychology (Billig, 1976). From the social psychological side, intergroup perspectives on group and individual behaviour draw on sociological variables and concepts (Hogg & Abrams, 1988; **see Chapter 11**). Contemporary social psychology also abuts sociolinguistics and the study of language and communication (Gasiorek, Giles, Holtgraves, & Robbins, 2012; Holtgraves, 2010, 2014; **see Chapter 15**) and even literary criticism (Potter, Stringer, & Wetherell, 1984). It also overlaps with economics, where behavioural economists have 'discovered' that economic behaviour is not rational, because people are influenced by other people – actual, imagined or implied (Cartwright, 2014). Social psychology also draws on and is influenced by applied research in many areas, such as sports psychology, health psychology and organisational psychology.

Social psychology's location at the intersection of different disciplines is part of its intellectual and practical appeal. But it is also a source of debate about what constitutes social psychology as a distinct scientific discipline. If we lean too far towards individual cognitive processes, then perhaps we are pursuing individual psychology or cognitive psychology. If we lean too far towards the role of language, then perhaps we are being

scholars of language and communication. If we overemphasise the role of social structure in intergroup relations, then perhaps we are being sociologists. The issue of exactly what constitutes social psychology fuels a vigorous meta-theoretical debate (i.e. a debate about what sorts of theory are appropriate for social psychology), which forms the background to the business of social psychology (see the section 'Theories in social psychology').

Topics of social psychology

One way to define social psychology is in terms of what social psychologists study. Because this text is a comprehensive coverage of the main phenomena that social psychologists study, and have studied, social psychology can be defined by the contents of this and other publications that present themselves as social psychology texts. A brief look at the contents of this text will give a flavour of the scope of social psychology. Social psychologists study an enormous range of topics, including conformity, persuasion, power, influence, obedience, prejudice, prejudice reduction, discrimination, stereotyping, bargaining, sexism and racism, small groups, social categories, intergroup relations, crowd behaviour, social conflict and harmony, social change, overcrowding, stress, the physical environment, decision making, the jury, leadership, communication, language, speech, attitudes, impression formation, impression management, self-presentation, identity, the self, culture, emotion, attraction, friendship, the family, love, romance, sex, violence, aggression, altruism and prosocial behaviour (acts that are valued positively by society).

One problem with defining social psychology solely in terms of what it studies is that social psychology is not properly differentiated from other disciplines. For example, 'intergroup relations' is a focus not only of social psychologists but also of political scientists and sociologists. The family is studied not only by social psychologists but also by clinical psychologists. What makes social psychology distinct is a combination of *what* it studies, *how* it studies it and what *level of explanation* is sought.

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Conformity
Tats and beards are de rigueur.

Research methods

Scientific method

Social psychology employs the scientific method to study social behaviour (Figure 1.2). It is the *method* – not the people who use it, the things they study, the facts they discover or the explanations they propose – that distinguishes science from other approaches to knowledge. In this respect, the main difference between social psychology and, say, physics, chemistry or biology is that the former studies human social behaviour, while the others study non-organic phenomena and chemical and biological processes.

Hypotheses
Empirically testable predictions about what co-occurs with what, or what causes what.

Science involves the formulation of **hypotheses** (predictions) on the basis of prior knowledge, speculation and casual or systematic observation. Hypotheses are formally stated predictions about what may cause something to occur; they are stated in such a way that they can be tested empirically to see if they are true. For example, we might hypothesise that ballet dancers perform better in front of an audience than when dancing alone. This hypothesis can be tested empirically by measuring and comparing their performance alone and in front of an audience.

Strictly speaking, empirical tests can falsify hypotheses (causing the investigator to reject the hypothesis, revise it or test it in some other way) but not prove them (Popper, 1969). If a hypothesis is supported, confidence in its veracity increases and one may generate more finely tuned hypotheses. For example, if we find that ballet dancers do indeed perform better in front of an audience, we might then hypothesise that this occurs only when the dancers are already well rehearsed; in science-speak we have hypothesised that the effect of the presence of an audience on performance is conditional on (moderated by) amount of prior rehearsal. An important feature of the scientific method is replication: it guards against the possibility that a finding is tied to the circumstances in which a test was conducted. It also guards against fraud.

The alternative to science is dogma or rationalism. Something is true because one simply believes it to be true, or because an authority (e.g. the ancient philosophers, religious
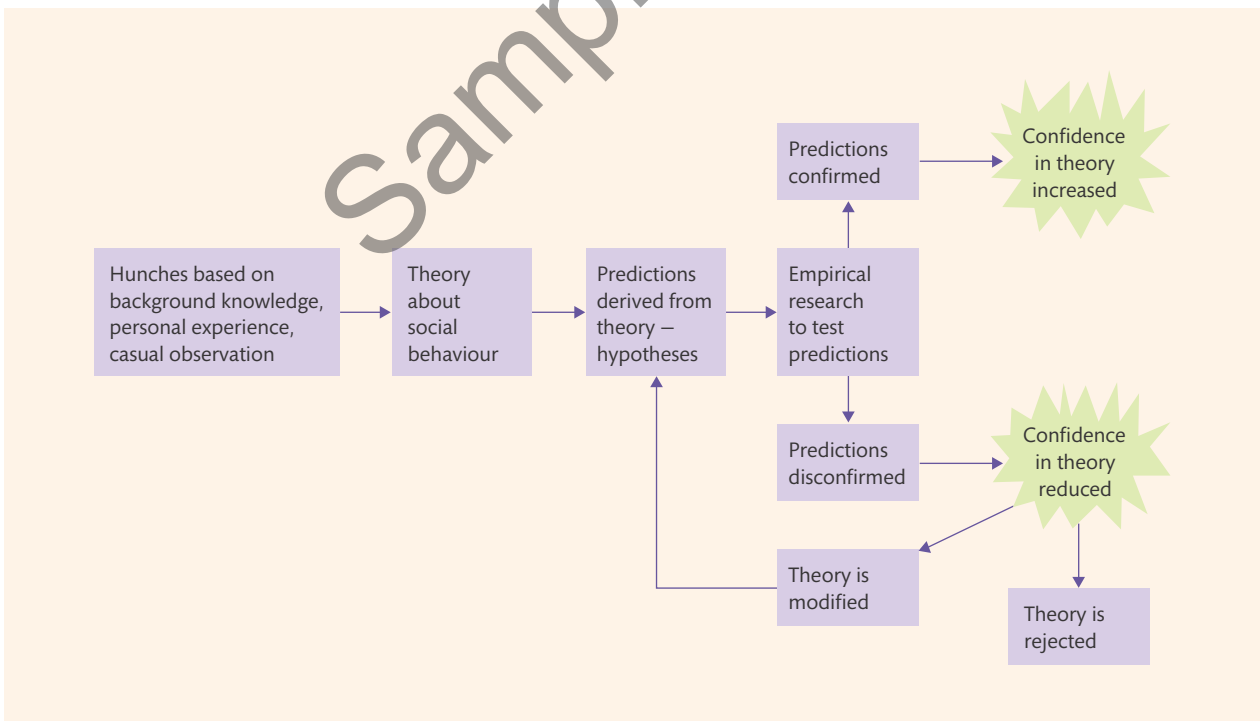

Figure 1.2 A model of the scientific method used by social psychologists

scriptures, charismatic leaders) says it is so, or because one simply believes it to be true. Valid knowledge is acquired by pure reason and grounded in faith and conviction: for example, by learning well, and uncritically accepting and trusting, the pronouncements of authorities. Even though the scientific revolution, championed by such people as Copernicus, Galileo and Newton, occurred in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, dogma and rationalism still exist as influential alternative paths to knowledge.

As a science, social psychology has at its disposal an array of different methods for conducting empirical tests of hypotheses (Crano & Brewer, 2015). There are two broad types of method: *experimental* and *non-experimental* – each has advantages and limitations. The choice of an appropriate method is determined by the nature of the hypothesis under investigation, the resources available for doing the research (e.g. time, money, research participants) and the ethics of the method. Confidence in the validity of a hypothesis is enhanced if the hypothesis has been confirmed a number of times by different research teams using different methods. Methodological pluralism helps to minimise the possibility that the finding is an artefact of a particular method, and replication by different research teams helps to avoid **confirmation bias**, which occurs when researchers become so personally involved in their own theories that they lose objectivity in interpreting data (Greenwald & Pratkanis, 1988; Johnson & Eagly, 1989).

Experiments

An experiment is a hypothesis test in which something is done to see its effect on something else. For example, if I hypothesise that my car greedily guzzles too much petrol because the tyres are under-inflated, I can conduct an experiment. I can note petrol consumption over an average week; then I can increase the tyre pressure and again note petrol consumption over an average week. If consumption is reduced, then my hypothesis is supported. Casual experimentation is one of the commonest and most important ways in which people learn about their world. It is an extremely powerful method because it allows us to identify the causes of events and thus gain control over our destiny.

Not surprisingly, systematic experimentation is the most important research method in science. Experimentation involves *intervention* in the form of *manipulation* of one or more **independent variables**, and then measurement of the effect of the treatment (manipulation) on

Confirmation bias
The tendency to seek, interpret and create information that verifies existing explanations for the cause of an event.

Independent variables
Features of a situation that change of their own accord or can be manipulated by an experimenter to have effects on a dependent variable.

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Brain imaging
Social neuroscientists are using new techniques, such as fMRI, to establish correlates, consequences and causes of social behaviour.

Dependent variables
Variables that change as a consequence of changes in the independent variable.

one or more focal **dependent variables**. In the example above, the independent variable is tyre inflation, which was manipulated to create two experimental conditions (lower versus higher pressure), and the dependent variable is petrol consumption, which was measured on refilling the tank at the end of the week. More generally, independent variables are dimensions that the researcher hypothesises will have an effect and that can be varied (e.g. tyre pressure in the present example, and the presence or absence of an audience in the ballet-dancing example). Dependent variables are dimensions that the researcher hypothesises will vary (petrol consumption or quality of the ballet dancer's performance) as a consequence of varying the independent variable. Variation in the dependent variable is *dependent* on variation in the independent variable.

Social psychology is largely experimental, in that most social psychologists would prefer to test hypotheses experimentally if at all possible, and much of what we know about social behaviour is based on experiments. Indeed, one of the most enduring and prestigious scholarly societies for the scientific study of social psychology is the Society of Experimental Social Psychology. How might we on the one hand justify studying the motives of a political or religious zealot, and also undertake experimental psychological research on the other? See Box 1.1.

A typical social psychology experiment might be designed to test the hypothesis that violent television programs increase aggression in young children. One way to do this would be to assign 20 children randomly to two conditions in which they individually watch either a violent or a non-violent program, and then observe the amount of aggression expressed immediately afterwards by the children while they are at play. Random assignment of participants (in this case, children) reduces the chance of systematic differences between the participants in the two conditions. If there were any systematic differences, say, in age, sex or parental background, then any significant effects on aggression might be due to age, sex or background rather than to the violence of the television program. That is, age, sex or parental background would be *confounded* with the independent variable. Likewise, the television program viewed in each condition should be identical in all respects except for the degree of violence. For instance, if the violent program also contained more action, then we would not know whether subsequent differences in aggression were due to the violence, the action or both. The circumstances surrounding the viewing of the two programs should also be identical. If the violent programs were viewed in a bright red room and the non-violent programs in a blue room, then any effects might be due to room colour, violence or both. It is critically important in experiments to avoid **confounding**: the conditions must be identical in all respects except for those represented by the manipulated independent variable.

Confounding
Where two or more independent variables covary in such a way that it is impossible to know which has caused the effect.

We must also be careful about how we measure effects: that is, the dependent measures that assess the dependent variable. In our example, it would probably be inappropriate, because of the children's age, to administer a questionnaire measuring aggression. A better

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Box 1.1 Our world
Radicalisation and the slaughter of innocents

Radicalisation has become a burning concern around the globe. It is identified as a significant way in which largely isolated individuals become indoctrinated and inspired by terrorist ideologies and then embark on some appalling slaughter of innocents. Examples are countless: for example, the July 2011 terrorist act in Norway where Anders Behring Breivik killed 77 people mainly at a summer camp, and the July 2016 attack where Mohamed Lahouaiej-Bouhlel drove a truck at people celebrating Bastille Day on the Promenade des Anglais in Nice and killed 86.

What is the social psychology of radicalisation and how would you set about researching it? What causes would you investigate – and how significant are psychological causes relative to socioeconomic causes? Could you do laboratory or field experiments? Perhaps the only options are non-experimental – a case study or archival research?

Consider this issue in the light of our discussion in this chapter of the nature of social psychology and its research methods.

technique would be unobtrusive observation of behaviour; but then, what would we code as 'aggression'? The criterion would have to be sensitive to changes; in other words, loud talk or violent assault with a weapon might be insensitive, as all children talk loudly when playing (there is a *ceiling effect*), and virtually no children violently assault one another with a weapon while playing (there is a *floor effect*). In addition, it would be a mistake for whoever records or codes the behaviour to know which experimental condition the child was in: such knowledge might compromise objectivity. The coder(s) should know as little as possible about the experimental conditions and the research hypotheses.

The example used here is of a simple experiment that has only two levels of only one independent variable – called a one-factor design. Most social psychology experiments are more complicated than this. For instance, we might formulate a more textured hypothesis that aggression in young children is increased by television programs that contain *realistic* violence. To test this hypothesis, a two-factor design would be adopted. The two factors (independent variables) would be (1) the violence of the program (low versus high) and (2) the realism of the program (realistic versus fantasy). The participants would be randomly assigned across four experimental conditions in which they watched (1) a non-violent fantasy program, (2) a non-violent realistic program, (3) a violent fantasy program or (4) a violent realistic program. Of course, independent variables are not restricted to two levels. For instance, we might predict that aggression is increased by moderately violent programs, whereas extremely violent programs are so distasteful that aggression is actually suppressed. Our independent variable of program violence could now have three levels (low, moderate, extreme).

The laboratory experiment

The classic social psychology experiment is conducted in a laboratory in order to control as many potentially confounding variables as possible. The aim is to isolate and manipulate a single aspect of a variable, an aspect that may not normally occur in isolation outside the laboratory. Laboratory experiments are *intended* to create artificial conditions. Although a social psychology laboratory may contain computers, wires and flashing lights, or even medical equipment and sophisticated brain imaging technology, often it is simply a room containing tables and chairs. For example, our ballet hypothesis could be tested in the laboratory by formalising it to one in which we predict that someone performing any well-learnt task performs that task more quickly in front of an audience. We could unobtrusively time individuals, for example, taking off their clothes and then putting them back on again (a well-learnt task), either alone in a room or while being scrutinised by two other people (an audience). We could compare these speeds with those of someone dressing up in unusual and difficult clothing (a poorly learnt task). This method was actually used by Markus (1978) when she investigated the effect of an audience on task performance (**see Chapter 8 for details**).

Social psychologists have become increasingly interested in investigating the biochemical and brain activity correlates, consequences and causes of social behaviour. This has generated an array of experimental methods that make social psychology laboratories look more like biological or physical science laboratories. For example, a psychologist studying how interaction with other people may make us feel anxious and stressed might measure changes in our level of the hormone cortisol in our saliva (e.g. Blascovich & Seery, 2007; Townsend, Major, Gangi, & Mendes, 2011). Research in social neuroscience using functional magnetic resonance imaging (**fMRI**) has become popular. This involves participants being placed in a huge and very expensive magnetic cylinder to measure their electro-chemical brain activity (Lieberman, 2010; Todorov, Fiske, & Prentice, 2011).

Laboratory experiments allow us to establish cause–effect relationships between variables. However, laboratory experiments have a number of drawbacks. Because experimental conditions are artificial and highly controlled, particularly social neuroscience experiments, laboratory findings cannot be generalised directly to the less 'pure' conditions that exist in the 'real' world outside the laboratory. However, laboratory findings address *theories* about human social behaviour, and, on the basis of laboratory experimentation, we can generalise

Laboratory
A place, usually a room, in which data are collected, usually by experimental methods.

fMRI (functional magnetic resonance imaging)
A method used in social neuroscience to measure where electrochemical activity in the brain is occurring.

these theories to apply to conditions other than those in the laboratory. Laboratory experiments are intentionally low on **external validity** or **mundane realism** (i.e. how similar the conditions are to those usually encountered by participants in the real world) but should always be high on **internal validity** or **experimental realism** (i.e. the manipulations must be full of psychological impact and meaning for the participants) (Aronson, Ellsworth, Carlsmith, & Gonzales, 1990).

Laboratory experiments are susceptible to a range of biases. There are **subject effects** that can cause participants' behaviour to be an artefact of the experiment rather than a spontaneous and natural response to a manipulation. Artefacts can be minimised by carefully avoiding demand characteristics (Orne, 1962), *evaluation apprehension* and *social desirability* (Rosenberg, 1969). **Demand characteristics** are features of the experiment that seem to 'demand' a particular response: they give information about the hypothesis and inform helpful and compliant participants about how to react to confirm the hypothesis. Participants are thus no longer naive or *blind* regarding the experimental hypothesis. Participants in experiments are real people, and experiments are real social situations. Not surprisingly, participants may want to project the best possible image of themselves to the experimenter and other participants present. This can influence spontaneous reactions to manipulations in unpredictable ways. There are also **experimenter effects**. The experimenter is often aware of the hypothesis and may inadvertently communicate cues that cause participants to behave in a way that confirms the hypothesis. This can be minimised by a **double-blind** procedure, in which the experimenter is unaware of which experimental condition they are running.

Since the 1960s, laboratory experiments have tended to rely on psychology undergraduates as participants (Sears, 1986). The reason is a pragmatic one – psychology undergraduates are readily available in large numbers to come to a physical laboratory on campus. In most major universities, there is a research participation scheme, or 'subject pool', where psychology students act as experimental participants in exchange for course credits or as a course requirement. Critics have often complained that this over-reliance on a particular type of participant may produce a somewhat distorted view of social behaviour – one that is not easily generalised to other sectors of the population. In their defence, experimental social psychologists point out that theories, not experimental findings, are generalised, and that replication and methodological pluralism ensure that social psychology is about people, not just about psychology students.

The field experiment

Social psychology experiments can be conducted in more naturalistic settings outside the laboratory. For example, we could test the hypothesis that prolonged eye contact is uncomfortable and causes 'flight' by having an experimenter stand at traffic lights and either gaze intensely at the driver of a car stopped at the lights or gaze nonchalantly in the opposite direction. The dependent measure would be how fast the car sped away once the lights changed (Ellsworth, Carlsmith, & Henson, 1972; **see Chapter 15**). Field experiments have high external validity and, as participants are usually completely unaware that an experiment is taking place, are not reactive (i.e. no demand characteristics are present). However, there is less control over extraneous variables, random assignment is sometimes difficult, and it can be difficult to obtain accurate measurements or measurements of subjective feelings (generally, overt behaviour is all that can be measured).

Non-experimental methods

Systematic experimentation tends to be the preferred method of science, and indeed it is often equated with science. However, there are all sorts of circumstances where it is simply impossible to conduct an experiment to test a hypothesis. For instance, theories about

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External validity or Mundane realism
Similarity between circumstances surrounding an experiment and circumstances encountered in everyday life.

Internal validity or Experimental realism
Psychological impact of the manipulations in an experiment.

Subject effects
Effects that are not spontaneous, owing to demand characteristics and/ or participants wishing to please the experimenter.

Demand characteristics
Features of an experiment that seem to 'demand' a certain response.

Experimenter effects
Effects produced or influenced by clues to the hypotheses under examination, inadvertently communicated by the experimenter.

Double-blind
Procedure to reduce experimenter effects, in which the experimenter is unaware of the experimental conditions.

planetary systems and galaxies can pose a real problem: we cannot move planets around to see what happens! Likewise, social psychological theories about the relationship between biological sex and decision-making are not amenable to experimentation, because we cannot manipulate biological sex experimentally and see what effects emerge. Social psychology also confronts ethical issues that can proscribe experimentation. For instance, hypotheses about the effects on self-esteem of being a victim of violent crime are not easily tested experimentally – we would not be able to assign participants randomly to two conditions and then subject one group to a violent crime and see what happened.

Where experimentation is not possible or appropriate, social psychologists have a range of non-experimental methods from which to choose. Because these methods do not involve the manipulation of independent variables against a background of random assignment to condition, it is almost impossible to draw reliable causal conclusions. For instance, we could compare the self-esteem of people who have been victims of violent crime with those who have not. Any differences could be attributed to violent crime but could also be due to other uncontrolled differences between the two groups. We can only conclude that there is a **correlation** between self-esteem and being the victim of violent crime. There is no evidence that one causes the other (i.e. being a victim may lower self-esteem or having lower self-esteem may increase the likelihood of becoming a victim). Both could be *correlated* or co-occurring effects of some third variable, such as chronic unemployment, which independently lowers self-esteem *and* increases the probability that one might become a victim. In general, non-experimental methods involve the examination of correlation between naturally occurring variables and as such do not permit us to draw causal conclusions.

Correlation
Where changes in one variable reliably map onto changes in another variable, but it cannot be determined which of the two variables *caused* the change.

Archival research

Archival research is a non-experimental method that is useful for investigating large-scale, widely occurring phenomena that may be remote in time. The researcher assembles data collected by others, often for reasons unconnected with those of the researcher. For instance, Janis (1972) used an archival method to show that overly cohesive government decision-making groups may make poor decisions with disastrous consequences because they adopt poor decision-making procedures (called 'groupthink'; **see Chapter 9**). Janis constructed his theory on the basis of an examination of biographical, autobiographical and media accounts of the decision-making procedures associated with, for example, the 1961 Bay of Pigs fiasco, in which the United States futilely tried to invade Cuba. Other examples of archival research include Fogelson's (1970) archival analysis of the 1960s urban riots in the United States and Simonton's (1980) archival and secondary data analyses of battles (**see Chapter 8**).

Archival methods are often used to make comparisons between different cultures or nations regarding things such as suicide, mental health or child-rearing strategies. Archival research is not reactive, but it can be unreliable because the researcher usually has no control over the primary data collection, which might be biased or unreliable in other ways (e.g. missing vital data). The researcher has to make do with whatever is there.

Archival research
Non-experimental method involving the assembly of data, or reports of data, collected by others.

Case studies

The **case study** allows an in-depth analysis of a single case (either a person or a group) or a single event. Case studies often employ an array of data collection and analysis techniques involving structured, open-ended interviews and questionnaires and the observation of behaviour. Case studies are well suited to the examination of unusual or rare phenomena that could not be created in the laboratory: for instance, bizarre cults, mass murderers or disasters. Case studies are useful as a source of hypotheses, but findings may suffer from researcher or subject bias (the researcher is not blind to the hypothesis, there are demand characteristics and participants suffer evaluation apprehension), and findings may not easily be generalised to other cases or events.

Case study
In-depth analysis of a single case (or individual).

Qualitative research and discourse analysis

Closely related to case studies is a range of non-experimental methodologies that analyse largely naturally occurring behaviour in great detail. Among these are methods that meticulously unpack **discourse**, what people say to whom and in what context, in order to identify the underlying narrative that may reveal what people are thinking, what their motivations are and what the discourse is intended to do. **Discourse analysis** (Augoustinos & Tileaga, 2012; Edwards, 1997; Potter & Wetherell, 1987; Wetherell, Taylor, & Yates, 2001) draws on literary criticism and the notion that language is a performance (e.g. Hall, 2000) and is often grounded in a generally critical orientation towards mainstream social psychology (cf. Billig, 2008). Discourse analysis is both a language-based and communication-based methodology and approach to social psychology (**see Chapter 15**) that has proven particularly useful in a number of areas, including the study of prejudice (e.g. Van Dijk, 1987; Verkuyten, 2010).

Discourse
Entire communicative event or episode located in a situational and socio-historical context.

Discourse analysis
A set of methods used to analyse text – in particular, naturally occurring language – in order to understand its meaning and significance.

Survey research

Another non-experimental method is data collection by *survey*. Surveys can involve structured interviews, in which the researcher asks participants a number of carefully chosen questions and notes the responses, or a questionnaire, in which participants write their own responses to written questions. In either case the questions can be open-ended (i.e. respondents can give as much or as little detail in their answers as they wish) or closed-ended (where there is a limited number of predetermined responses, such as circling a number on a nine-point scale). For instance, to investigate immigrant workers' experiences of prejudice, one could ask respondents a set of predetermined questions and summarise the gist of their responses or assign a numerical value to their responses. Alternatively, respondents could record their own responses by writing a paragraph or by circling numbers on scales in a questionnaire.

Surveys can be used to obtain a large amount of data from a large sample of participants; hence generalisation is often not a problem. However, like case studies and qualitative methods, this method is subject to experimenter bias, subject bias and evaluation apprehension. Anonymous and confidential questionnaires may minimise experimenter bias, evaluation apprehension and some subject biases, but demand characteristics may remain. In addition, poorly constructed questionnaires may obtain biased data due to 'response set' – that is, the tendency for some respondents to agree unthinkingly with statements or to choose mid-range or extreme responses.

Field studies

The final non-experimental method is the field study. We have already described the field experiment; the field study is essentially the same but without any interventions or manipulations. Field studies involve the observation, recording and coding of behaviour as it occurs. Most often, the observer is non-intrusive by not participating in the behaviour, and 'invisible' by not influencing the ongoing behaviour. For instance, one could research the behaviour of students in the student cafeteria by concealing oneself in a corner and observing what goes on. Sometimes 'invisibility' is impossible, so the opposite strategy can be used – the researcher becomes a full participant in the behaviour. For instance, it would be rather difficult to be an invisible observer of gang behaviour. Instead, you could study the behaviour of a street gang by becoming a full member of the gang and surreptitiously taking notes (e.g. Whyte, 1943; **see Chapter 8**). Field studies are excellent for investigating spontaneously occurring behaviour in its natural context but are particularly prone to experimenter bias, lack of objectivity, poor generalisability and distortions due to the impact of the researcher on the behaviour under investigation. Also, if you join a gang, there is an element of personal danger!

Data and analysis

Social psychologists love data and are eager to collect it in any way they can. Recently, the Internet has provided a new opportunity for data collection that is becoming increasingly popular because it is an inexpensive, fast and efficient way to collect data from a large and

Statistics
Social psychological data are often quantitative, requiring statistical analysis to find patterns that give meaning to the numbers.

diverse population. One particularly popular web-based resource is Amazon's Mechanical Turk (MTurk), which, if used carefully, allows a range of methods that can generate high-quality data (Buhrmester, Kwang, & Gosling, 2011; Mason & Suri, 2012; Paolacci & Chandler, 2014; Paolacci, Chandler, & Ipeirotis, 2010).

Research provides data, which are analysed to draw conclusions about whether hypotheses are supported. The type of analysis undertaken depends on at least:

- *The type of data obtained* – for example, binary responses such as 'yes' versus 'no', continuous variables such as temperature or response latency, defined positions on nine-point scales, rank ordering of choices and open-ended written responses (text).
- *The method used to obtain data* – for example, controlled experiment, open-ended interview, participant observation, archival search.
- *The purposes of the research* – for example, to describe in depth a specific case, to establish differences between two groups of participants exposed to different treatments, to investigate the correlation between two or more naturally occurring variables.

Overwhelmingly, social psychological knowledge is based on statistical analysis of quantitative data. Data are obtained as, or are transformed into, numbers (i.e. quantities), and these numbers are then compared in various formalised ways (i.e. by **statistics**). For example, to decide whether women are more friendly interviewees than are men, we could compare transcripts of interviews of both men and women. We could then code the transcripts to count how often participants made positive remarks to the interviewer, and compare the mean count for, say, 20 women with the mean for 20 men. In this case, we would be interested in knowing whether the difference between men and women was 'on the whole' greater than the difference among men and among women. To do this, we could use a simple statistic called the **t test**, which computes a number called the t statistic that is based on both the difference between the women's and men's mean friendliness scores and the degree of variability of scores within each sex. The larger the value of t, the larger the between-sex difference relative to within-sex differences.

The decision about whether the difference between groups is psychologically significant depends on its **statistical significance**. Social psychologists adhere to an arbitrary convention: if the obtained value of t has less than a 1-in-20 (i.e. 0.05) probability of occurring by chance

Statistics
Formalised numerical procedures performed on data to investigate the magnitude and/or significance of effects.

t test
Procedure to test the statistical significance of an effect in which the mean for one condition is greater than the mean for another.

Statistical significance
An effect is statistically significant if statistics reveal that it, or a larger effect, is unlikely to occur by chance more often than 1 in 20 times.
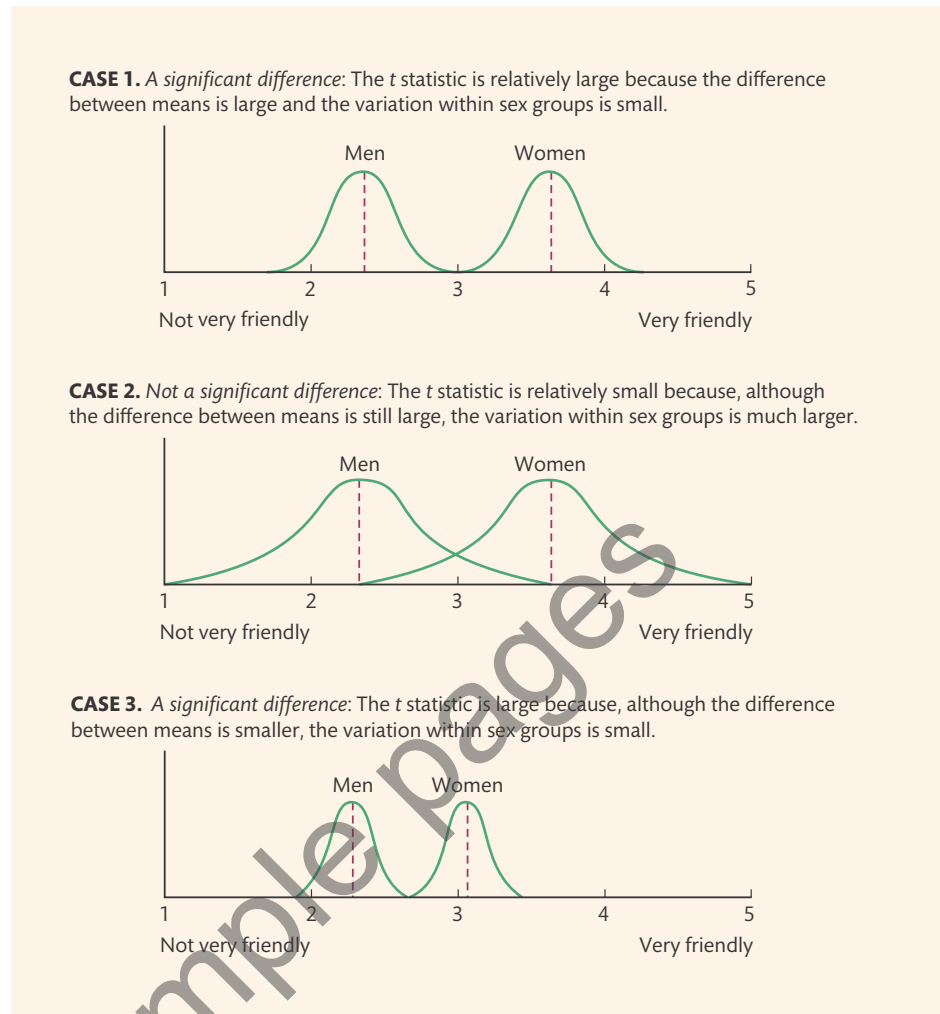
CASE 1. *A significant difference*: The *t* statistic is relatively large because the difference between means is large and the variation within sex groups is small.

CASE 2. *Not a significant difference*: The *t* statistic is relatively small because, although the difference between means is still large, the variation within sex groups is much larger.

CASE 3. *A significant difference*: The *t* statistic is large because, although the difference between means is smaller, the variation within sex groups is small.

Figure 1.3 Distribution of friendliness scores for 20 male and 20 female interviewees, using the *t* statistic

(that is, if we randomly selected 100 groups of 10 males and 10 females, only five times or fewer would we obtain a value of *t* as great as or greater than that obtained in the study), then the obtained difference is statistically significant and there really is a difference in friendliness between male and female interviewees (see Figure 1.3).

The *t* test is very simple. However, the principle underlying the *t* test is the same as that underlying more sophisticated and complex statistical techniques used by social psychologists to test whether two or more groups differ significantly. The other major method of data analysis used by social psychologists is correlation, which assesses whether the co-occurrence of two or more variables is significant. Again, although the example below is simple, the underlying principle is the same for an array of correlational techniques.

To investigate the idea that rigid thinkers tend to hold more politically conservative attitudes (Rokeach, 1960; **see Chapter 10**) we could have 30 participants answer a questionnaire measuring cognitive rigidity (dogmatism: a rigid and inflexible set of attitudes) and political conservatism (e.g. endorsement and espousal of right-wing political and social policies). If we rank the 30 participants in order of increasing dogmatism and find that conservatism also increases, with the least dogmatic person being the least conservative and the most dogmatic the most conservative, then we can say that the two variables are positively correlated (see Figure 1.4, in which dots represent individual persons, positioned with respect to their scores on both dogmatism and conservatism scales). If we find that conservatism systematically decreases with increasing dogmatism, then we say that the two variables are
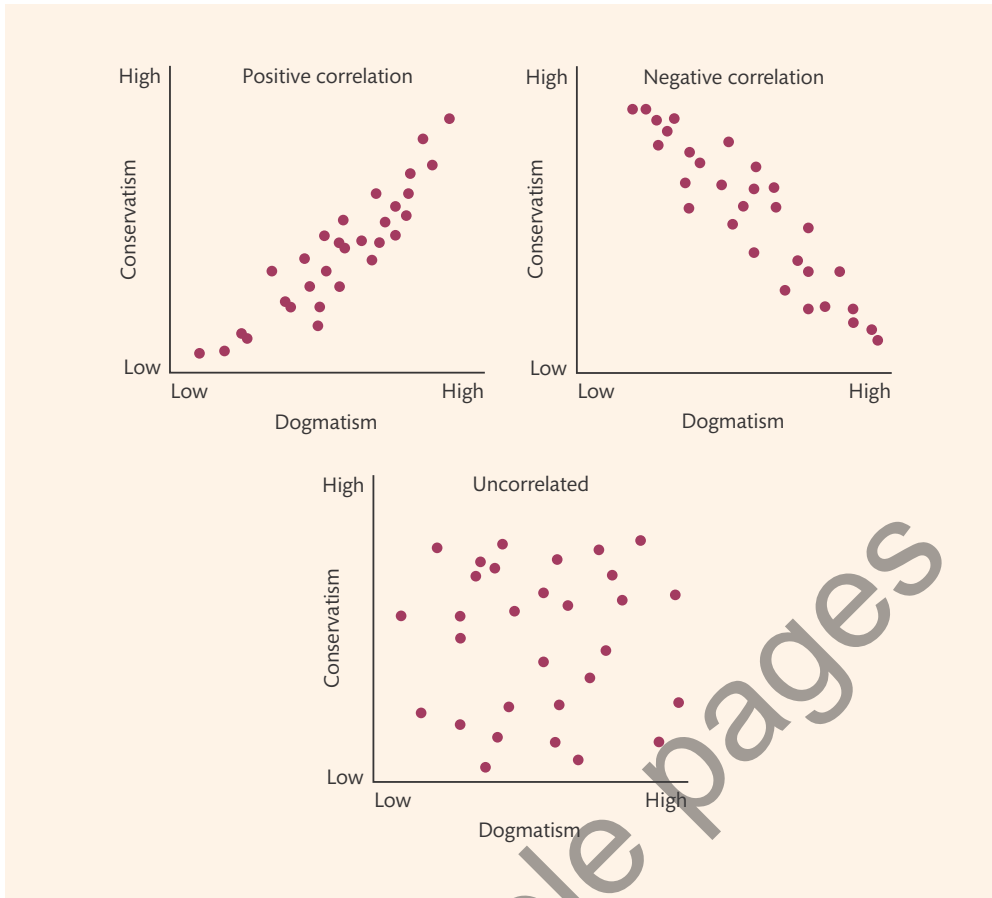
Figure 1.4 Correlation between dogmatism and conservatism for 30 respondents, using Pearson's correlation coefficient

negatively correlated. If there seems to be no systematic relationship between the two variables, then they are uncorrelated – there is zero correlation. A statistic can be calculated to represent correlation numerically; for instance, the statistical measure known as Pearson's r varies from -1 for a perfect negative to $+1$ for a perfect positive correlation. Depending on, among other things, the number of persons, we can also know whether the correlation is statistically significant at the conventional 5 per cent level.

Although statistical analysis of quantitative data is the bread and butter of social psychology, some social psychologists find that this method is unsuited to their purposes and prefer a more *qualitative* analysis. For example, analysis of people's explanations for unemployment or prejudice may sometimes benefit from a more discursive, non-quantitative analysis in which the researcher tries to unravel what is said in order to go beyond surface explanations and get to the heart of the underlying beliefs and reasons. One form of qualitative analysis is *discourse analysis* (e.g. Augoustinos & Tileaga, 2012; Potter & Wetherell, 1987; Tuffin, 2005; Wetherell, Taylor, & Yates, 2001). Discourse analysis treats all 'data' as 'text' – that is, as a communicative event that is replete with multiple layers of meaning but that can be interpreted only by considering the text in its wider social context. For example, discourse analysts believe that we should not take people's responses to attitude statements in questionnaires at face value and subject them to statistical analysis. They believe, instead, that we should interpret what is being communicated. This is made possible only by considering the response as a complex conjunction of social-communicative factors embedded in both the immediate and wider sociohistorical context. However, discourse analysis is more than a research method: it is also a systematic critique of 'conventional' social psychological methods and theories (see the subsection 'Positivism and post-positivism' later in this chapter).

Research ethics

As researchers, social psychologists confront important ethical issues. Clearly, it is unethical to fake data or to report results in a biased or partial manner that significantly distorts what was done, what was found and how the hypotheses and theory under examination now fare. As in life, scientists do sometimes cheat, and this not only impedes scientific progress and damages the reputation of the discipline, but it has dreadful career and life consequences for those involved. However, cheating is very rare and equally rare across both the psychological and biomedical sciences (Stroebe, Postmes, & Spears, 2012). In the case of social psychology, the largely team-based nature of research helps prevent scientists, who are all under enormous pressure to publish, take, to put it euphemistically, scientific shortcuts.

Research ethics is also about treatment of research participants. For instance, is it ethical to expose experimental participants to a treatment that is embarrassing or has potentially harmful effects on their self-concept? If such research is important, what are the rights of the person, what are the ethical obligations of the researcher and what guidelines are there for deciding? Although ethical considerations surface most often in experiments (e.g. Milgram's (1974) obedience studies; **see Chapter 7**), they can also confront non-experimental researchers. For example, is it ethical for a non-participant observer investigating crowd behaviour to refrain from interceding in a violent assault? See Box 1.2.

To guide researchers, the American Psychological Association established, in 1972, a set of ethical principles for conducting research involving humans, which was revised and updated in 2016 (American Psychological Association, 2017). These principles are reflected in the ethics codes of national societies of psychology in Europe. Researchers design their studies with these guidelines in mind and then obtain official approval from a university or departmental research ethics committee. Five ethical principles in particular have received the most attention: protection from harm, right to privacy, deception, informed consent and debriefing.

Physical welfare of participants

Clearly it is unethical to expose people to physical *harm*. For example, the use of electric shocks that cause visible burning would be difficult to justify. However, in most cases, it is also difficult to establish whether non-trivial harm is involved and, if so, what its magnitude is and whether debriefing (see the 'Debriefing' section later in this chapter) deals with it. For instance, telling experimental participants that they have done badly on a word-association task may have long-term effects on self-esteem and could therefore be considered harmful. On the other hand, the effects may be so minor and transitory as to be insignificant.

Box 1.2 Your life
Do research ethics apply to hypotheses you test in everyday life?

We often conduct social psychology research in our own everyday lives. For example, you might want to confirm your hypothesis that your best friend values your friendship above other friendships. To test this hypothesis, you decide to set up little challenges for him, such as going with you to watch a golf tournament – you absolutely love golf, but he finds it about as exciting as watching paint dry. If he goes with you and tries to look engaged – hypothesis supported. If he drops out at the last minute, or he goes but tries to spoil it for you by looking miserable and grumbling incessantly – hypothesis disconfirmed. Is it ethical to conduct this piece of research?

Of course, we do this kind of private 'research' all the time to learn about our world. We do not think of it in terms of research ethics. Maybe we should? After all, you could argue that the welfare of the 'participant' is put at risk, and you have used deception by not explaining the hypothesis you are testing. What do you think – do principles of research ethics apply to everyday hypothesis testing that we use to understand our day-to-day life?

Respect for privacy

Social psychological research often involves invasion of *privacy*. Participants can be asked intimate questions, can be observed without their knowledge and can have their moods, perceptions and behaviour manipulated. It is sometimes difficult to decide whether the research topic justifies invasion of privacy. At other times, it is more straightforward – for example, intimate questions about sexual practices are essential for research into behaviour that may put people at risk of contracting HIV and developing AIDS. Concern about privacy is usually satisfied by ensuring that data obtained from individuals are entirely *confidential*: that is, only the researcher knows who said or did what. Personal identification is removed from data (rendering them *anonymous*), research findings are reported as means for large groups of people, and data no longer useful are usually destroyed.

Use of deception

Laboratory experiments, as we have seen, involve the manipulation of people's cognition, feelings or behaviour in order to investigate the spontaneous, natural and non-reactive effect of independent variables. Because participants need to be naive regarding hypotheses, experimenters commonly conceal the true purpose of the experiment. A degree of *deception* is often necessary. Between 50 and 75 per cent of experiments published prior to the mid-1980s involved some degree of deception (Adair, Dushenko, & Lindsay, 1985; Gross & Fleming, 1982). Because the use of deception seems to imply 'trickery', 'deceit' and 'lying', it has attracted a frenzy of criticism – for example, Baumrind's (1964) attack on Milgram's (1963, 1974) obedience studies (**see Chapter 7**). Social psychologists have been challenged to abandon controlled experimental research in favour of role playing or simulations (e.g. Kelman, 1967) if they cannot do experiments without deception.

   This is probably too extreme a request, as social psychological knowledge has been enriched enormously by classic experiments that have used deception (many such experiments are described in this text). Although some experiments have used deception that seems excessive, in practice the deception used in the overwhelming majority of social psychology experiments is trivial. For example, an experiment may be introduced as a study of group decision making when in fact it is part of a program of research into prejudice and stereotyping. In addition, there has been no evidence of any long-term negative consequences of the use of deception in social psychology experiments (Elms, 1982), and experimental participants themselves tend to be impressed, rather than upset or angered, by cleverly executed deceptions, and they view deception as a necessary withholding of information or a necessary ruse (Christensen, 1988; Sharpe, Adair, & Roese, 1992; Smith, 1983). How would you address the first 'What do *you* think?' question at the beginning of this chapter?

Informed consent

A way to safeguard participants' rights in experiments is to obtain their *informed consent* to participate. In principle, people should give their consent freely (preferably in writing) to participate on the basis of full information about what they are consenting to take part in, and they must be entirely free to withdraw without penalty from the research whenever they wish. Researchers cannot lie or withhold information in order to induce people to participate, nor can they make it 'difficult' to say 'no' or to withdraw (i.e. via social pressure or by exercise of personal or institutionalised power). In practice, however, terms such as 'full information' are difficult to define, and, as we have just seen, experiments often require some deception so that participants remain naive.

Debriefing

Participants should be fully *debriefed* after taking part in an experiment. Debriefing is designed to make sure that people leave the laboratory with an increased respect for and understanding of social psychology. More specifically, debriefing involves a detailed explanation of the experiment and its broader theoretical and applied context. Any deceptions are explained and justified to the satisfaction of all participants, and care is taken to make sure that the effects of manipulations have been undone. However, strong critics of deception (e.g. Baumrind, 1985) believe that no amount of debriefing puts right what they consider to be the fundamental wrong of deception that undermines basic human trust.

Social psychologists often conduct and report research into socially sensitive phenomena, or research that has implications for socially sensitive issues: for example, stereotyping, prejudice and discrimination (**see Chapters 10, 11 and 15**). In these cases, the researcher must be especially careful that both the conducting and reporting of research are done in a way that is not biased by personal prejudices and not open to public misinterpretation, distortion or misuse. For example, early research into sex differences in conformity found that women conformed more than men. This finding is, of course, fuel to the view that women are more dependent than men. Later research discovered that men and women conform equally, and that whether one conforms or not depends largely on how much familiarity and confidence one has with the conformity task. Early research used tasks that were more familiar to men than to women, and many researchers looked no further because the findings confirmed their assumptions (**Chapters 7 and 10**).

Theories and theorising

According to Van Lange (2013), a good theory should reveal the truth, describe specifics in terms of more general abstracted principles, make an advance on existing theory and be framed in such a way that it speaks to and is applicable to the real world. In some aspects, this echoes Lewin's earlier promotion of full cycle research, in which basic research, which develops theory, and applied research, which involves the application of theory to social issues, mutually reinforce each other (e.g. Lewin, 1951; Marrow, 1969).

Social psychologists construct, test and apply theories of human social behaviour. A social psychological theory is an integrated set of propositions that explains the causes of social behaviour, generally in terms of one or more social psychological processes. Theories rest on explicit assumptions about social behaviour and contain a number of defined concepts and formal statements about the relationship between concepts. Ideally, these relationships are causal ones that are attributed to the operation of social and/or psychological processes. Theories are framed in such a way that they generate hypotheses that can be tested empirically. Social psychological theories vary greatly in terms of their rigour, testability and generality. Some theories are short-range mini-theories tied to specific phenomena, whereas others are broader general theories that explain whole classes of behaviour. Some even approach the status of 'grand theory' (such as evolutionary theory, Marxism, general relativity theory and psychodynamic theory) in that they furnish a general perspective on social psychology.

Social identity theory (e.g. Tajfel & Turner, 1986; **see Chapters 4 and 11**) is a good example of a relatively general mid-range social psychological theory. It explains how the behaviour of people in groups relates to their self-conception as group members. The theory integrates a number of compatible (sub)theories that deal with and emphasise (see Abrams & Hogg, 2010; Hogg, 2006):

- intergroup relations and social change;
- motivational processes associated with group membership and group behaviour;
- social influence and conformity processes within groups;
- cognitive processes associated with self-conception and social perception.

Ian Leonard/Alamy Stock Photo

Social identity
According to *kogyaru* fashion in Japan, being thin is desirable. Wearing a school uniform, a very short skirt, loose socks and loafers are also good choices.

These, and other associated processes, operate together to produce group behaviour, as distinct from interpersonal behaviour. This theory generates testable predictions about a range of group phenomena, including stereotyping, intergroup discrimination, social influence in groups, group cohesiveness, social change and even language and ethnicity.

Theories in social psychology

Theories in social psychology can generally be clustered into types of theory (Van Lange, Kruglanski, & Higgins, 2012), with different types of theory reflecting different *meta-theories*. Just as a theory is a set of interrelated concepts and principles that explain a phenomenon, a **meta-theory** is a set of interrelated concepts and principles about which theories or types of theory are appropriate. Some theories can be extended by their adherents to account for almost the whole of human behaviour – the 'grand theories' mentioned above. In this section, we discuss several major types of theory that have had an impact on social psychology.

Meta-theory
Set of interrelated concepts and principles concerning which theories or types of theory are appropriate.

Behaviourism

Behaviourist or learning perspectives derive from Ivan Pavlov's early work on conditioned reflexes and B. F. Skinner's work on operant conditioning. **Radical behaviourists** believe that behaviour can be explained and predicted in terms of reinforcement schedules – behaviour associated with positive outcomes or circumstances grows in strength and frequency. However, more popular with social psychologists is **neo-behaviourism**, which invokes unobservable intervening constructs (e.g. beliefs, feelings, motives) to make sense of behaviour.

The behaviourist perspective in social psychology produces theories that emphasise the role of situational factors and reinforcement/learning in social behaviour. One example is the *reinforcement–affect model of interpersonal attraction* (e.g. Lott, 1961; **Chapter 14**): people grow to like people with whom they associate positive experiences (e.g. we like people who praise us). Another, more general example is *social exchange theory* (e.g. Kelley & Thibaut, 1978; **Chapter 14**): the nature of social interactions depends on people's evaluation of the rewards and costs involved. *Social modelling* is another broadly behaviourist

Radical behaviourist
One who explains observable behaviour in terms of reinforcement schedules, without recourse to any intervening unobservable (e.g. cognitive) constructs.

Neo-behaviourist
One who attempts to explain observable behaviour in terms of contextual factors and unobservable intervening constructs such as beliefs, feelings and motives.

perspective: we learn vicariously by imitating behaviour that we see others being reinforced for (e.g. Bandura, 1977; **Chapter 12**). Finally, *drive theory* (Zajonc, 1965; **Chapter 8**) explains how the strength of a learned response influences whether we perform a task better or worse in front of an audience.

Cognitive psychology

Cognitive theories
Explanations of behaviour in terms of the way people actively interpret and represent their experiences and then plan action.

Critics have argued that behaviourist theories exaggerate how passive people are as recipients of external influences. **Cognitive theories** redress the balance by focusing on how people's cognitive processes and cognitive representations actively interpret and change their environment. Cognitive theories have their origins in Kurt Koffka and Wolfgang Köhler's Gestalt psychology of the 1930s, and in many ways, social psychology has always been fundamentally cognitive in its perspective (Landman & Manis, 1983; Markus & Zajonc, 1985). One of social psychology's earliest cognitive theories was Kurt Lewin's (1951) field theory, which dealt, in a somewhat complicated manner, with how people's cognitive representations of features of the social environment produce motivational forces to behave in specific ways. Lewin is generally considered the father of experimental social psychology.

In the 1950s and 1960s, cognitive consistency theories dominated social psychology (Abelson et al., 1968). These theories assumed that cognitions about ourselves, our behaviour and the world, which are contradictory or incompatible in other ways, produce an uncomfortable state of cognitive arousal that motivates us to resolve the cognitive conflict. This perspective has been used to explain attitude change (e.g. Aronson, 1984; **Chapter 6**). In the 1970s, attribution theories dominated social psychology. Attribution theories focus on how people explain the causes of their own and other people's behaviour, and on the consequences of causal explanations (e.g. Hewstone, 1989; **Chapter 3**). Finally, since the late 1970s, social cognition has been the dominant perspective in social psychology. It subsumes a number of theories specifying how cognitive processes (e.g. categorisation) and cognitive representations (e.g. schemas) influence and are influenced by behaviour (e.g. Fiske & Taylor, 2013; **Chapter 2**).

Neuroscience and biochemistry

Social neuroscience
Exploration of brain activity associated with social cognition and social psychological processes and phenomena.

A more recent development of social cognition is a focus on neurological and biochemical correlates of social behaviour. Called **social neuroscience**, or social cognitive neuroscience, this approach rests on the view that because psychology happens in the brain, cognition must be associated with electrochemical brain activity (e.g. Harmon-Jones & Winkielman, 2007; Lieberman, 2010; Ochsner, 2007; Ochsner & Lieberman, 2001; Todorov, Fiske, & Prentice, 2011; see **Chapter 2**). Social neuroscience uses brain imaging methodologies, for example fMRI, to detect and locate brain activity associated with social thinking and social behaviour. This general idea that we are biological entities and that therefore social behaviour has neuro- and biochemical correlates surfaces in other theorising that focuses more on biochemical markers of social behaviour – for example, measures of the hormone cortisol in people's blood or saliva as a marker of stress (see Blascovich & Seery, 2007).

Evolutionary social psychology

Evolutionary social psychology
An extension of evolutionary psychology that views complex social behaviour as adaptive, helping the individual, kin and the species as a whole to survive.

Evolutionary psychology
A theoretical approach that explains 'useful' psychological traits, such as memory, perception or language, as adaptations through natural selection.

Another theoretical development is **evolutionary social psychology** (Caporael, 2007; Kenrick, Maner, & Li, 2005; Neuberg, Kenrick, & Schaller, 2010; Schaller, Simpson, & Kenrick, 2006; Simpson, & Kenrick, 1997). Drawing on nineteenth-century Darwinian theory (Darwin, 1872) and modern **evolutionary psychology** and sociobiology (e.g. Wilson, 1975, 1978), evolutionary social psychologists argue that much of human behaviour is grounded in the ancestral past of our species. Buss and Reeve (2003, p. 849) suggest that evolutionary processes have shaped 'cooperation and conflict within families, the emergence of cooperative alliances, human aggression, acts of altruism . . .'. These behaviours had survival value for the species and so, over time, became a part of our genetic make-up.

A biological perspective can be pushed to extremes and used as a sovereign explanation for most, even all, behaviour. However, when the human genome had finally been charted in 2003, researchers felt that the 20 000–25 000 genes and 3 billion chemical base pairs making up human DNA were insufficient to account for the massive diversity of human behaviour – context and environment play a significant role (e.g. Lander et al., 2001). This is, of course, where social psychology steps in. Nevertheless, evolutionary social psychology has relevance for several topics covered in this text – for example, leadership (**Chapter 9**), aggression (**Chapter 12**), prosocial behaviour (**Chapter 13**), interpersonal attraction (**Chapter 14**) and non-verbal and human spatial behaviour (**Chapter 15**).

Personality and individual differences

Social psychologists have often explained social behaviour in terms of enduring (sometimes innate) personality differences between people. For instance, good leaders have charismatic personalities (**Chapter 9**), people with prejudiced personalities express prejudice (**Chapter 10**) and people who conform too much have conformist personalities (**Chapter 7**). In general, social psychologists now consider personality and differences in personality to be at best a partial explanation, at worst an inadequate re-description, of social phenomena. There are at least two reasons for this:

1 There is actually very little evidence for stable personality traits. People behave in different ways at different times and in different contexts – they are influenced by situation and context.

2 If personality is defined as behavioural consistency across contexts, then rather than being an explanation of behaviour, personality is something to be explained. Why do some people resist social and contextual influences on behaviour? What is it about their interpretation of the context that causes them to behave in this way?

Overall, most contemporary treatments of personality see personality as interacting with many other factors to impact on behaviour (e.g. Funder & Fast, 2010; Snyder & Cantor, 1998).

Collectivist theories

Personality and individual difference theories can be contrasted with collectivist theories. Collectivist theories focus on people as a product of their location in the matrix of social categories and groups that make up society. People behave as they do not because of personality or individual predispositions, but because they internalise group norms that influence behaviour in specific contexts. An early collectivist viewpoint was William McDougall's (1920) theory of the 'group mind' (**Chapter 11**). In groups, people change the way they think, process information and act, so that group behaviour is quite different from interpersonal behaviour – a group mind emerges.

More recently, this idea has been significantly elaborated and developed by European social psychologists who emphasise the part played by the wider social context of intergroup relations in shaping behaviour (e.g. Tajfel, 1984). Of these, social identity theory is perhaps the most developed (Tajfel & Turner, 1986; **Chapter 11**). Its explanation of the behaviour of people in groups is strongly influenced by an analysis of the social relations between groups. Collectivist theories adopt a 'top-down' approach, in which individual social behaviour can be properly explained only with reference to groups, intergroup relations and social forces. Individualistic theories, in contrast, are 'bottom-up': individual social behaviour is constructed from individual cognition or personality.

Many social psychological theories contain elements of two or more different perspectives, and these and other perspectives often merely lend emphasis to different theories. Meta-theory does not usually intentionally reveal itself with prodigious fanfare (but see Abrams & Hogg, 2004).

Social psychology in crisis

Social psychology occurs against a background of meta-theoretical contrasts, which from time to time come to the fore to become the focus of intense public debate. For example, in the late 1960s and early 1970s, many social psychologists felt the discipline had reached a crisis that seriously eroded people's confidence in the discipline (e.g. Elms, 1975; Israel & Tajfel, 1972; Rosnow, 1981; Strickland, Aboud, & Gergen, 1976). There were two principal concerns:

1 Social psychology was overly *reductionist* (i.e. by explaining social behaviour mainly in terms of individual psychology, it failed to address the essentially social nature of the human experience).

2 Social psychology was overly *positivistic* (i.e. it adhered to a model of science that was distorted, inappropriate and misleading).

Reductionism and levels of explanation

Reductionism
Explanation of a phenomenon in terms of the language and concepts of a lower level of analysis, usually with a loss of explanatory power.

Level of explanation
The types of concepts, mechanisms and language used to explain a phenomenon.

Reductionism is the practice of explaining a phenomenon with the language and concepts of a lower level of analysis. Society is explained in terms of groups, groups in terms of interpersonal processes, interpersonal processes in terms of intrapersonal cognition, cognition in terms of neuropsychology, neuropsychology in terms of biology, and so on. A problem of reductionist theorising is that it can leave the original scientific question unanswered. For example, the act of putting one's arm out of the car window to indicate an intention to turn can be explained in terms of muscle contraction, or nerve impulses, or understanding of and adherence to social conventions, and so on. If the **level of explanation** does not match the level of the question, then the question remains effectively unanswered.

Although a degree of reductionism can strengthen theorising, too great a degree can create an explanatory gap. Social psychology has been criticised for being inherently reductionist because it tries to explain social behaviour purely in terms of asocial intrapsychic cognitive and motivational processes (e.g. Moscovici, 1972; Pepitone, 1981; Sampson, 1977; Taylor & Brown, 1979). The recent trends towards social cognitive neuroscience and evolutionary social psychology, explaining behaviour in terms of neural activity and genetic predisposition, can be criticised on the same grounds (cf. Dovidio, Pearson, & Orr, 2008). How would you now address the second 'What do *you* think?' question at the beginning of this chapter?

Reductionism can be a particular problem for explanations of group processes and intergroup relations. By viewing these phenomena exclusively in terms of personality, interpersonal relations or intrapsychic processes, social psychology may leave some of their most important aspects incompletely explained – for example, prejudice, discrimination, stereotyping, conformity and group solidarity (Billig, 1976; Hogg & Abrams, 1988; Turner & Oakes, 1986). Worse, reductionist explanations of societally constructed perceptions and behaviours can have undesirable sociopolitical consequences. Fine has levelled this charge at social neuroscience, arguing that some fMRI research reinforces gender stereotypes (Fine, 2010).

Willem Doise (1986; Lorenzi-Cioldi & Doise, 1990) has suggested that one way around this problem is to accept the existence of different levels of explanation but to construct theories that formally integrate (Doise uses the French term 'articulate') concepts from different levels (see Box 1.3). This idea has been adopted by many social psychologists (see Tajfel, 1984). One of the most successful attempts may be social identity theory (e.g. Tajfel & Turner, 1986; **see Chapter 11**), which articulates individual cognitive processes, social interactive processes and large-scale social forces to explain group behaviour. Doise's ideas have also been employed to reinterpret group cohesiveness (Hogg, 1992, 1993), attribution theories (Hewstone, 1989) and social representations (e.g. Doise,

Box 1.3 Research classic
Levels of explanation in social psychology

I Intrapersonal

Analysis of psychological processes to do with people's representation and organisation of their experience of the social environment (e.g. research on cognitive balance).

II Interpersonal and situational

Analysis of interindividual interaction within circumscribed situations. Social positional factors outside the situation are not considered. The focus is on the dynamics of relations between specific individuals at a specific time and in a specific situation (e.g. some attribution research, research using game matrices).

III Positional

Analysis of interindividual interaction in specific situations, but with the role of social position (e.g. status, identity) outside the situation taken into consideration (e.g. some research into power and social identity).

IV Ideological

Analysis of interindividual interaction that considers the role of general social beliefs, and of social relations between groups (e.g. some research into social identity, social representations and minority influence; studies considering the role of cultural norms and values).

Source: Taken from material in Hogg (1992, p. 62) and based on Lorenzi-Cioldi and Doise (1990, p. 73) and Doise (1986, pp. 10–16).

Clémence, & Lorenzi-Cioldi, 1993; Lorenzi-Cioldi & Clémence, 2001). Organisational psychologists have also advocated articulation of levels of analysis – they use the term 'cross-level research' (Wilpert, 1995; see also Haslam, 2004).

Positivism and post-positivism

Positivism is the non-critical acceptance of scientific method as the only way to arrive at true knowledge. Positivism was introduced in the early nineteenth century by the French mathematician and philosopher Auguste Comte and was enormously popular until the end of that century. The character Mr Gradgrind in Charles Dickens's 1854 novel *Hard Times* epitomises positivism: science as a religion. A more contemporary one-dimensional stereotype of positivism is embodied by geeky, nerd-like characters such as Doc in the *Back to the Future* movies and Sheldon and friends in the phenomenally popular TV series *The Big Bang Theory*.

Positivism
Non-critical acceptance of science as the only way to arrive at true knowledge: science as religion.

Social psychology has been criticised for being positivistic (e.g. Gergen, 1973; Henriques et al., 1984; Potter, Stringer, & Wetherell, 1984; Shotter, 1984). It is argued that because social psychologists are ultimately studying themselves, they cannot achieve the level of objectivity of, say, a chemist studying a compound or a geographer studying a landform. Since complete objectivity is unattainable, scientific methods, particularly experimental ones, are simply not appropriate for social psychology. Social psychology can only masquerade as a science – it cannot be a true science. Critics argue that what social psychologists propose as fundamental causal mechanisms (e.g. categorisation, attribution, cognitive balance, self-concept) are only 'best-guess' concepts that explain some historically and culturally restricted data – data that are subject to unavoidable and intrinsic bias. Critics also feel that by treating humans as objects or clusters of variables that can be manipulated experimentally, we are not only cutting ourselves off from a rich reservoir of subjective or introspective data, but we are also dehumanising people.

These criticisms have produced some quite radical post-positivism alternatives to traditional social psychology. Examples include social constructionism (Gergen, 1973), humanistic psychology (Shotter, 1984), ethogenics (Harré, 1979), discourse analysis or discursive psychology (Augoustinos & Tileaga, 2012; Edwards, 1997; Potter & Wetherell, 1987), critical

psychology (Billig, 2008) and post-structuralist perspectives (Henriques et al., 1984). There are differences among these alternatives, but they share an emphasis on understanding people as whole human beings who are constructed historically and who try to make sense of themselves and their world. Research methods tend to emphasise in-depth subjective analysis (often called *deconstruction*) of the relatively spontaneous accounts that people give of their thoughts, feelings and actions. Subjectivity is considered a virtue of, rather than an impediment to, good research. The fact that discursive psychology is fundamentally incommensurate with 'mainstream' social psychology has more recently worried some scholars and led them to advocate a degree of rapprochement (e.g. Rogers, 2003; Tuffin, 2005).

However, most mainstream social psychologists respond to the problem of positivism in a less dramatic way, which does not involve diluting or abandoning the scientific method. Instead, they deal with the pitfalls of positivism by being rigorous in the adoption of best-practice scientific methods of research and theorising (e.g. Campbell, 1957; Jost & Kruglanski, 2002; Kruglanski, 1975; Turner, 1981a). For example, **operational definitions** of social psychological concepts (e.g. aggression, altruism, leadership) are critical – a key feature of positivism is that scientific concepts be defined in a concrete manner that allows them to be measured. In addition, as scientists, we should be mindful of our own subjectivity and should acknowledge and make explicit our biases. We should also be sensitive to the pitfalls of reductionism and, where appropriate, articulate different levels of analysis (as discussed earlier). We should also recognise that experimental participants are real people who do not throw off their past history and become unidimensional 'variables' when they enter the laboratory. Culture, history, socialisation and personal motives are all present in the laboratory – experiments are social situations (Tajfel, 1972). Finally, attention should be paid to language, as that is perhaps the most significant way in which people represent the world, think, plan action and manipulate the world around them (**Chapter 15**). Language is also the epitome of a social variable: it is socially constructed and internalised to govern individual social cognition and behaviour.

> **Operational definition**
> Defines a theoretical term in a way that allows it to be manipulated or measured.

Historical context

Social psychology is not a static science. It has a history, and it is invaluable to consider a science in its proper historical context in order to understand its true nature. Here we give an overview of the history of social psychology. Although ancient forms of social and political philosophy considered such questions as the nature–nurture controversy, the origins of society and the function of the state, it was mostly a speculative exercise devoid of fact gathering (Hollander, 1967). An empirical approach to the study of social life did not appear until the latter part of the nineteenth century.

Social psychology in the nineteenth century

Anglo-European influences

An influential precursor of the development of social psychology as an independent discipline was the work of scholars in Germany, known as the *folk psychologists*. In 1860, a journal devoted to ***Völkerpsychologie*** was founded by Steinthal and Lazarus. It contained both theoretical and factual articles. In contrast to general psychology (elaborated later by Wundt), which dealt with the study of the individual mind, folk psychology, which was influenced by the philosopher Hegel, dealt with the study of the *collective* mind. This concept of collective mind was interpreted in conflicting ways by Steinthal and Lazarus, meaning on the one hand a societal way of thinking within the individual and, on the other, a form of super-mentality that could enfold a whole group of people.

> ***Völkerpsychologie***
> Early precursor of social psychology, as the study of the collective mind, in Germany in the mid- to late nineteenth century.

This concept, of a *group mind*, became, in the 1890s and early 1900s, a dominant account of social behaviour. An extreme example of it can be found in the work of the French writer Gustave Le Bon (1896/1908), who argued that crowds often behave badly because the behaviour of the individual is controlled by the group mind. The English psychologist William McDougall (1920) even wrote an entire book, entitled *The Group Mind*, as an explanation of collective behaviour. Much later, Solomon Asch (1951) observed that the wider issue that such writers confronted had not gone away: to understand the complexities of an individual's behaviour, we need to view the person in the context of group relations.

Early texts

At the dawn of the twentieth century, there were two social psychology texts, by Bunge (1903) and Orano (1901). Because they were not in English, they received little attention in Britain and the United States. Even earlier, an American, Baldwin (1897/1901), touched on social psychology in a work that dealt mainly with the social and moral development of the child. A book by the French sociologist Gabriel Tarde (1898) had clear implications for the kind of data and the level of explanation that social psychology should adopt. He adopted a bottom-up approach, which was offered in debate with Emile Durkheim. Whereas Durkheim argued that the way people behave is determined by social laws that are fashioned by society, Tarde proposed that a science of social behaviour must derive from the psychology of the individual. His conception of social psychology is closer in flavour to most current thinking than any of the other early texts (Clark, 1969).

The two early texts that caught the attention of the English-speaking world were written by McDougall (1908) and the American sociologist E. A. Ross (1908). Neither looks much like a modern social psychology text. The central topics of McDougall's book, for example, were the principal instincts, the primary emotions, the nature of sentiments, moral conduct, volition, religious conceptions and the structure of character. Compare these with the chapter topics of the present text.

The rise of experimentation

In 1924, Floyd Allport published a highly influential textbook; it set an agenda for social psychology that was quickly and enduringly followed by many teachers in psychology departments for years to come. Following the manifesto for psychology as a whole laid out by the behaviourist John Watson (1913), Allport argued that social psychology would flourish only if it became an experimental science. The challenge was taken up by Gardner Murphy and Lois Murphy (1931/1937), who published a text proudly entitled *Experimental Social Psychology*. Not all of the studies reviewed were true experiments, but the authors' intentions for the discipline were clear.

Although earlier texts had not shown it, the closing decade of the nineteenth century had set an agenda in which social psychology would be inextricably entwined with the broader discipline of general psychology. As such, social psychology's subsequent development reflects the way in which psychology was defined and taught in university departments of psychology, particularly in the United States, which rapidly replaced Germany as the leading nation for psychological research. Just as the psychological laboratory at Leipzig founded by Wilhelm Wundt in 1879 had provided an experimental basis for psychology in Germany, the laboratories set up at American universities did likewise in the United States. In the period 1890–1910, the growth of laboratories devoted to psychological research was rapid (Ruckmick, 1912). Thirty-one American universities established experimental facilities in those 20 years. The subject taught in these departments was clearly defined as an experimental science. In the United States, therefore, it is not surprising that social psychology should quite early on view the **experimental method** as a touchstone. By the time Allport produced his 1924 text, this trend was well established.

Experimental method
Intentional manipulation of independent variables in order to investigate effects on one or more dependent variables.

When was social psychology's first experiment?

This is a natural question to ask, but the answer is clouded. One of the oldest psychological laboratories was at Indiana University. It was here that Norman Triplett (1898) conducted a study that is often cited as social psychology's first experiment – an experiment on social facilitation (**see Chapter 8**). Allport (1954a) suggested that what Wundt did in Leipzig for experimental psychology, Triplett did in Indiana for a scientific social psychology. However, a different picture emerges in the literature of the time.

Triplett was a mature teacher who returned to postgraduate study to work on his master's thesis, published in 1898. His supervisors were two experimental psychologists, and the research was conducted in a laboratory that was one of the very best in the world. His interest had been stimulated by popular wisdom that competitive cyclists go faster when racing or being paced than when riding alone. Cycling as an activity had increased dramatically in popularity in the 1890s and had spectacular press coverage. Triplett listed explanations, some quite entertaining, for superior performance by cyclists who were racing or being paced:

- The pacer in front provided suction that pulled the following rider along, helping to conserve energy; or else the front rider provided shelter from the wind.

- A popular 'brain worry' theory predicted that solitary cyclists did poorly because they worried about whether they were going fast enough. This exhausted their brain and muscles, numbing them and inhibiting motor performance.

- Friends usually rode as pacers and no doubt encouraged the cyclists to keep up their spirits.

- In a race, a follower might be hypnotised by the wheels in front and so rode automatically, leaving more energy for a later, controlled burst.

- A dynamogenic theory – Triplett's favourite – proposed that the presence of another person racing aroused a 'competitive instinct' that released 'nervous energy', similar to the modern idea of arousal. The sight of movement in another suggested more speed, inspired greater effort and released a level of nervous energy that an isolated rider cannot achieve alone. The energy of the cyclist's movement was in proportion to the idea of that movement.

Social facilitation
These pictures represent an idea that caught Triplett's attention. Gold medallist Anna Meares competed in the track time trial. Would she ride faster when competing alone or with others? Why?

In the most famous of Triplett's experiments, schoolchildren worked in two conditions, alone and in pairs. They worked with two fishing reels that turned silk bands around a drum. Each reel was connected by a loop of cord to a pulley two metres away, and a small flag was attached to each cord. To complete one trial, the flag had to travel four times around the pulley. Some children were slower and others faster in competition, while others were little affected. The faster ones showed the effects of both 'the arousal of their competitive instincts and the idea of a faster movement' (Triplett, 1898, p. 526). The slower ones were overstimulated and, as Triplett put it, 'going to pieces'!

In drawing on the *dynamogenic theory* of his day, Triplett focused on ideo-motor responses – that is, one competitor's bodily movements acted as a stimulus for the other competitor. Essentially, Triplett highlighted *non-social* cues to illustrate the idea of movement being used as a cue by his participants.

The leading journals in the decade after Triplett's study scarcely referred to it. It was catalogued in general sources, but not under any headings with a 'social' connotation. Clearly, Triplett was neither a social psychologist nor considered to be one. If we adopt a revisionist view of history, then the spirit of his experiment emerges as a precursor to the study of social facilitation. The search for a founding figure, or a first idea, is not a new phenomenon in the history of science or, indeed, in the history of civilisation. The Triplett study has the trappings of an origin myth. There were other, even earlier, studies that might just as easily be called the 'first' in social psychology (Burnham, 1910; Haines & Vaughan, 1979). Vaughan and Guerin (1997) point out that sports psychologists have claimed Triplett as one of their own.

Later influences

Social psychology's development after the early impact of **behaviourism** was guided by a number of other important developments, some of which came from outside mainstream psychology.

Attitude scaling

One of these developments was the refinement of methods for constructing scales to measure attitudes (Bogardus, 1925; Likert, 1932; Thurstone, 1928; **see Chapter 5**). Some of this research was published in sociology journals. This is unsurprising – sociologists have often championed approaches to social psychology that are critical of an exclusively individual-behaviour level of analysis. There is still a branch of social psychology called sociological social psychology (e.g. Delamater & Ward, 2013; see Farr, 1996), and in the context of attitudes, Thomas and Znaniecki (1918) defined social psychology as the scientific study of attitudes rather than of social behaviour (**see Chapter 5**).

Studies of the social group

Groups have always been a core focus of social psychology (**see Chapters 8, 9 and 11**). Kurt Lewin, considered the 'father' of experimental social psychology, put much of his energy into the study of group processes (Marrow, 1969). For example, one of Lewin's imaginative studies was an experiment on the effect of leadership style on small-group behaviour (Lewin, Lippitt, & White, 1939; **see also Chapter 9**), and by 1945 he had founded a research centre devoted to the study of group dynamics (which still exists, in a different guise and now at the University of Michigan).

Groups have also been a focus of industrial psychologists. A well-known study carried out in a factory setting showed that work productivity can be influenced more by the psychological properties of the work group and the degree of interest that management shows in its workers (Roethlisberger & Dickson, 1939) than by mere physical working

conditions. A significant outcome of research of this kind was consolidation of an approach to social psychology in which theory and application can develop together. Indeed, Lewin is often quoted as saying 'there is nothing so practical as a good theory'. He was a passionate advocate of what he called 'full cycle' research, where basic and applied research each inform one another.

Popular textbooks

The 1930s marked a burgeoning of the study of social psychology and thus the publication of influential textbooks. Carl Murchison (1935) produced the first handbook, a weighty tome that proclaimed that here was a field to be taken seriously. A later expanded edition of the Murphy and Murphy text (1931/1937) summarised the findings of more than 1000 studies, although it was used mainly as a reference work. Perhaps the most widely used textbook of the time was written by LaPiere and Farnsworth (1936). Another by Klineberg (1940) was also popular; it featured contributions from cultural anthropology and emphasised the role played by culture in the development of a person's personality. Just after the Second World War, Krech and Crutchfield (1948) published an influential text that emphasised a *phenomenological approach* to social psychology; that is, an approach focusing on how people actually experience the world and account for their experiences.

In the 1950s and thereafter, the number of textbooks appearing on bookshelves increased exponentially. For obvious historical and demographic reasons (the legacy of the Second World War and a current population of 325 million English speakers), most texts have been and still are published in the United States. Although these texts mainly report American-based research and ideas, this has very noticeably changed over the past decade or so – European-based research and ideas are now an integral part of the reported science throughout this text. However, American texts are, understandably, written for American students at American institutions and can seem culturally alien to people living in Europe, Australasia and so forth. We like to think that the text you are now reading redresses this cultural leaning.

Blend Images. Shutterstock

Role transition
Birthdays can mark important life changes. In Latin America, quinceañera marks a 15-year-old girl's transition from childhood to womanhood. It signals her entry to a 'grown up' group, as well as being an opportunity to have some fun!

Famous experiments

A number of social psychology experiments stand out as having an enduring fascination for teachers and students alike. They have also had a wider impact across psychology and other disciplines, and some have entered popular culture. We will not go into detail about these studies here, as they are described in later chapters.

Muzafer Sherif (1935) conducted an experiment on *norm formation,* which caught the attention of psychologists eager to pinpoint what could be 'social' about social psychology (**Chapter 7**). Solomon Asch (1951) demonstrated the dramatic effect that *group pressure* can have in persuading a person to conform (**Chapter 7**). Muzafer and Carolyn Sherif (Sherif & Sherif, 1953) examined the impact that competition for resources can have on intergroup conflict (**Chapter 11**). Leon Festinger (1957) supported his theory of *cognitive dissonance* by showing that a smaller reward can change attitudes more than can a larger reward (Festinger & Carlsmith, 1959), a finding that annoyed orthodox reinforcement theorists of the time (**Chapters 5 and 6**). The term cognitive dissonance is now used (generally inaccurately) in everyday conversation. Stanley Milgram's (1963) study of *destructive obedience* highlighted the dilemma facing a person ordered by an authority figure to perform an immoral act, a study that became a focus of critics who questioned the future of the experimental method in social psychology (**Chapter 7**). Henri Tajfel (1970; Tajfel, Billig, Bundy, & Flament, 1971) conducted a watershed experiment to show that merely being categorised into groups was sufficient to generate *intergroup discrimination* (**Chapter 11**).

Finally, Phillip Zimbardo (1971) set up a simulated prison in the basement of the Stanford University psychology department to study *deindividuation* and the reality of and extremity of *roles* (**Chapter 8**). This study has caught the imagination of a reality-TV-oriented society, to the extent that two prominent British social psychologists, Alex Haslam and Stephen Reicher, were commissioned as consultants on a 2002 BBC TV program re-running the experiment (Reicher & Haslam, 2006). There is even a 2015 Hollywood-style movie called *The Stanford Prison Experiment* that dramatises the experiment in the form of a thriller.

Famous programs

One way of viewing the development of a discipline is to focus on social networks and ask 'Who's who?' and then 'Who influenced whom?'. Looked at in this way, the group-centred research of the charismatic Kurt Lewin (Marrow, 1969) had a remarkable impact on other social psychologists in the United States. One of his students was Leon Festinger, and one of Festinger's students was Stanley Schachter. The latter's work on the cognitive labelling of emotion is a derivative of Festinger's notion of social comparison (i.e. the way in which individuals use other people as a basis for assessing their own thoughts, feelings and behaviour).

There have been other groups of researchers whose research programs have had an enduring impact on the discipline. Circumstances surrounding the Second World War focused the attention of two research groups. Inspired by the possibility that the rise of German autocracy and fascism resided in the personality and child-rearing practices of a nation, one group studied the *authoritarian personality* (Adorno, Frenkel-Brunswik, Levinson, & Sanford, 1950) – embarking on an ambitious cross-cultural study of authoritarianism in the United States (**Chapter 10**). Another group studied attitude change. The Yale *attitude change* program, led by Carl Hovland, developed and tested theories explaining how techniques and processes of persuasion and propaganda could change people's attitudes (Hovland, Janis, & Kelley, 1953; **see Chapter 6**).

John Thibaut and Harold Kelley (1959) developed an approach to the study of interpersonal relationships, based on an economic model of *social exchange* (**Chapter 14**).
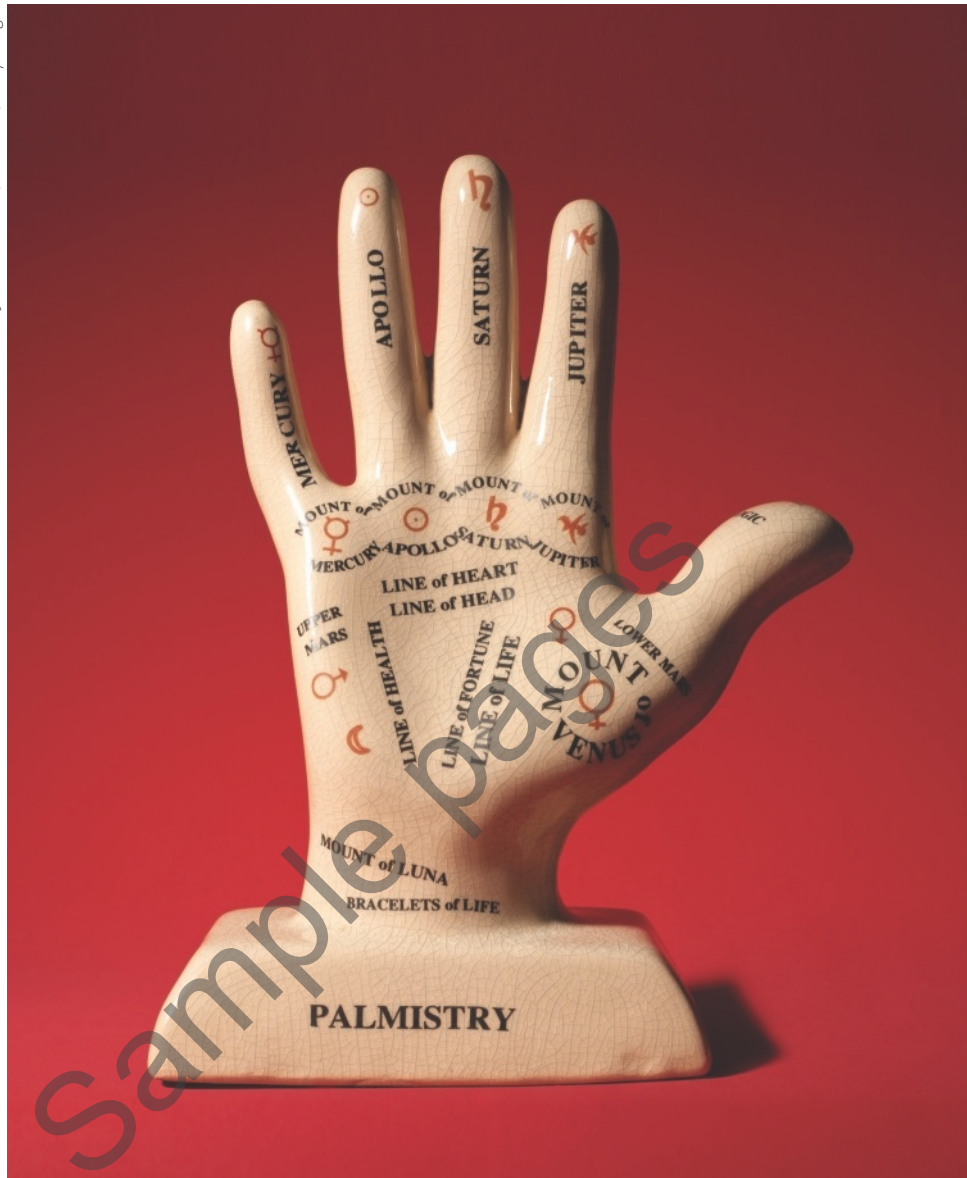
Attribution

People try to make sense of their lives in many different ways. We can try palmistry, or more mundanely examine the immediate causes of our experiences.

This approach has had an enormous impact in social psychology, beyond the study of close relationships. For example, Morton Deutsch (Deutsch & Krauss, 1960) applied the exchange principle to interpersonal bargaining. Once again, the long arm of Lewin is evident – all of these scholars (Thibaut, Kelley, Deutsch) were Lewin's students.

The modern period has been dominated by cognitive approaches. Ned Jones (Jones & Davis, 1965) launched *attribution theory* by focusing attention on the ordinary person's ideas about causality (**Chapter 3**). Darley and Latané (1968) researched *prosocial behaviour* by introducing an innovative cognitive model to explore how people interpret an emergency and sometimes fail to help a victim (**Chapter 13**).

Early work on social perception by Fritz Heider (1946) and Solomon Asch (1946) was transformed in the 1970s into contemporary *social cognition* (**see Chapter 2**). Some key players in this transformation were Walter Mischel (Cantor & Mischel, 1977), who explored

how perceived behaviour traits can function as prototypes, and Richard Nisbett and Lee Ross (1980), who explored the role of cognitive heuristics (mental short-cuts) in social thinking.

The journals

Journals are critical in science. They are overwhelmingly the main forum for scientists to exchange ideas and communicate ideas and findings. Early journals that were important up to the 1950s were the *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology* and the *Journal of Personality*. A sociological journal, *Sociometry,* also catered for social psychological work.

From the 1960s, there was increased demand for outlets. This reflected not only growth in the number of social psychologists around the world but also a demand for regional and sub-disciplinary representation. The *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology* divided into two, one part devoted to abnormal psychology and the other titled the *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* (founded in 1965). *Sociometry* was re-titled *Social Psychology Quarterly* (1979) to reflect more accurately its social psychological content. Anglo-European interests were represented by the *British Journal of Social and Clinical Psychology* (1963) (which split in about 1980 to spin off the *British Journal of Social Psychology*) and the *European Journal of Social Psychology* (1971).

Further demand for journals dedicated to experimental research was met by the *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology* (1965) and then in 1975 by the *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*. Other journals devoted to social psychology include the *Journal of Applied Social Psychology* (1971), *Social Cognition* (1982), the *Journal of Language and Social Psychology* (1982) and the *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships* (1984). Over the past 20 years, these journals have been joined by others, including *Personality and Social Psychology Review*, *Social Psychological and Personality Science*, *Group Processes and Intergroup Relations*, *Self and Identity*, *Group Dynamics* and *Social Influence*.

From the perspective of articles published, there was an explosion of interest in social psychology during the decade bridging the 1960s and the 1970s. Since then, publication has accelerated. In the past decade or so, we have witnessed a journal crisis in social psychology, and psychology more generally. There is so much published that the task of deciding what to read is overwhelming. One important criterion is the quality of the journal (i.e. its impact factor and the calibre of its editorial board), but there are now so many journals and such a huge volume of articles submitted that the editorial review process that is essential to quality is creaking under the load. This, in conjunction with the massive potential of electronic access to research, has led to a fiery debate about alternative forms of scientific communication and publication (Nosek & Bar-Anan, 2012).

Social psychology in Australia and New Zealand

Early origins

The parent discipline of psychology in Australia and New Zealand had its origins in Britain. In the early part of the last century, some of the textbooks used here were by British authors (e.g. Stout, McDougall). There were also early links with Wundt's experimental psychology at psychological laboratories at the Melbourne Teachers

College (Taft & Day, 1988) and at the Victoria University of Wellington. At its heart, early Australasian psychology was empirical – a characteristic of British philosophy at that time, which had espoused a doctrine of human knowledge that was derived from experience. In the years after the Second World War, there were departments of psychology at virtually all universities in both Australia and New Zealand. The subject quickly proved to be popular among undergraduates, and also among postgraduates as various career paths opened up. This is still the case today. From the 1950s onwards, Australasian psychologists paid increasing attention to theoretical developments and newer methods in the United States, as well as to the emergence of the American Psychological Association's code of ethics in both academic research and professional practice (see 'Research ethics' discussed earlier).

The history of social psychology in Australia and New Zealand also had its origins in Britain. This is no surprise since it developed as a subdiscipline within existing departments of psychology. In a similar way to general psychology, social psychology in Australia and New Zealand was increasingly influenced by theory and research paradigms developed in the United States. This was inevitable, given the post-war predominance of American textbooks and journals across nearly all fields of psychology.

Later trends

We noted in an earlier section a resurgence of European social psychology in the 1970s that contributed significantly to social psychology as a global enterprise. This has been reflected in parallel research strands – American and European – within Australasian social psychology. Consequently, we are in the enviable position of being able to be truly global and 'non-partisan' in integrating not only European and North American research agenda but also growing research in East Asia. This is perhaps what marks contemporary social psychology in Australia and New Zealand with a special character. However, with a combined population of just over 29 million in 2017, we are naturally and rightly influenced by the social psychology of North America and Western Europe, where just over 1 billion people live. In this respect, our social psychology is probably more cross-national than that found in, for example, the United States or Britain.

This begs the question: in what ways are we somewhat different? Because Australia and New Zealand are recent immigrant countries that confront the legacy of the treatment of indigenous populations and strive to practise multiculturalism, it is not surprising that issues to do with ethnicity, communication, language, culture, prejudice and intergroup relations are important areas of research (**see Chapters 10, 11, 15 and 16**). Another important area has arisen out of our progressive attitude towards HIV, smoking, cancer and sun protection: research into attitudes towards health-protective behaviours has a relatively high profile here.

Areas of research currently conducted here that have a high international profile are numerous (Feather, 2005). There is vigorous research in several fields, all of which are reflected to varying degrees in this book:

- person perception, social cognition, and affect and emotion;
- achievement motivation, attitudes and values, and the attitude–behaviour link;
- the effects of unemployment, tall poppies (high achievers) and cultural cringe;
- group dynamics, group decision making, leadership and the social psychology of organisations;
- social identity, self-categorisation theory, intergroup communication, intergroup emotion and ethnolinguistics;

- close relationships and marital satisfaction;
- self-esteem, body image and applications of discourse analysis;
- cross-cultural studies, studies of migrant groups and acculturative stress;
- ethnic identity and bicultural identity.

The list of topics continues to expand. While the longer-established universities have served a major role in stimulating such work, the past 20 years has witnessed a distribution of talented people into newer tertiary settings. This is a healthy trend and augurs well for the future of social psychology in this part of the world. The question of whether there is an indigenous social psychology (**see also Chapter 16**) or even a distinctive social psychology in Australia or New Zealand is an interesting one that is not easily answered. Feather (2005, p. 270) has noted:

> In the case of social psychology, advances are cumulative, although contributions in Australia and elsewhere [including New Zealand] tend to have a short 'shelf life' unless they capture the imagination of the wider community of social psychologists and are promoted in books and journals by influential figures and by formal and informal networks.

Today, Australian and New Zealand social psychologists are strongly represented on editorial boards of the top international journals, they publish widely and prolifically, and they pop up in disproportionate numbers at scientific conferences around the world. Most have had sabbatical, postdoctoral or doctoral experience at universities across the globe, particularly in Britain and the United States. Some prominent social psychologists have moved here from the United States and from Britain (Taft & Day, 1988), and others continue to do so, and some Australians and New Zealanders have left to work overseas. Many of the leading international scientific conferences for social psychologists have been hosted in Australia, and the annual Sydney Symposium on Social Psychology (SSSP), hosted by the University of New South Wales, has become an important venue for leading scientists from around the world. In addition, there is the annual Brisbane Symposium on Social Identity (BSSI), organised by the University of Queensland, which has been running since 1992, and more recently a series of social psychology meetings in Melbourne, hosted by a group of Melbourne universities.

Social psychology in Australia and New Zealand has been fundamentally invigorated by the establishment in 1995 of the Society of Australasian Social Psychologists (SASP), which has some 300 members. SASP is a formalisation and extension of the annual and peripatetic meeting of Australian social psychologists, with its beginnings in 1972 at Flinders University in Adelaide (Feather, 1995, 2005). Its annual conferences now feature a series of high-profile international speakers, a pre-conference program for postgraduates, and more recently an annual postgraduate summer school at different campuses in Australia. Links for postgraduates to undertake further study, conferences, visits and job opportunities are also fostered with both the United States and Europe. Visit SASP's website at www.sasp.org.au for more information.

It is perhaps significant that 1995 also witnessed the inaugural meeting in Hong Kong of the Asian Association of Social Psychology (AASP), in which prominent Australian and New Zealand social psychologists have been active office holders. Close Asia–Pacific ties have developed between SASP and AASP. Indeed, in mid-2001, the SASP and AASP meetings were run together in Melbourne, with a number of overlapping and joint sessions. There is now regular potential for increasing contact between social psychologists in both regions. Finally, a report on psychological science in Australia, commissioned by the Australian government and prepared under the auspices of the Australian Academy of Science in 1996, identified social psychology as both an area of special strength and a priority area for further development (Commonwealth of Australia, 1996, p. 44).

About this text

We have written this introductory text, now in its eighth edition, to reflect Australian and New Zealand social psychology as an integral part of contemporary social psychological science. We smoothly integrate American and European research but with an emphasis that is framed by European, not American, scientific and sociohistorical priorities. Students of social psychology in Australia and New Zealand tend to use a mixture of American and European texts. American texts are comprehensive, detailed and well produced, but are pitched too low for British and European universities, do not cover European topics very well and, quite understandably, are grounded in the day-to-day cultural experiences of Americans. European texts, which are generally edited collections of chapters by different authors, address European priorities but tend to be idiosyncratic, uneven and less well produced, and incomplete in their coverage of social psychology. Our text satisfies the need for a single comprehensive introduction to social psychology for Australian and New Zealand students of social psychology.

Our aim has been to write an introduction to social psychology for undergraduate university students of psychology. Its language caters to intelligent adults. However, since it is an *introduction*, we pay careful attention to accessibility of specialist language (i.e. scientific or social psychological jargon). It is intended to be a comprehensive introduction to mainstream social psychology, with no intentional omissions. We cover classic and contemporary theories and research, generally adopting a historical perspective that most accurately reflects the unfolding of scientific inquiry. The degree of detail and scope of coverage are determined by the scope and intensity of undergraduate social psychology courses in Australia and New Zealand. We have tried to write a text that combines the most important and enduring features of European and American social psychology. As such, this can be considered an international text, but one that specifically caters for the Australian and New Zealand intellectual, cultural and educational context.

Many social psychology texts separate basic theory and research from applied theory and research, generally by exiling to the end of the book 'applied' chapters that largely address health, organisations, justice or gender. Much like Kurt Lewin's view that there is nothing so practical as a good theory, our philosophy is that basic and applied research and theory are intertwined or best treated as intertwined: they are naturally interdependent. Thus, applied topics are interwoven with basic theory and research. Currently, some significant areas of application of social psychology include human development (e.g. Bennett & Sani, 2004; Durkin, 1995), health (e.g. Rothman & Salovey, 2007; Stroebe, 2011; Taylor, 2003), gender (e.g. Eagly, Beall, & Sternberg, 2005), organisations (e.g. Haslam, 2004; Thompson & Pozner, 2007), law and criminal justice (e.g. Kovera & Borgida, 2010; Tyler & Jost, 2007), political behaviour (e.g. Krosnick, Visser, & Harder, 2010; Tetlock, 2007) and culture (e.g. Heine, 2010, 2016; Smith, Bond, & Kağitçibaşi, 2006). Culture is now an integral part of contemporary social psychology (**see Chapter 16**), and language and communication (e.g. Holtgraves, 2010), which is central to social psychology but is often treated as an application, has its own chapter (**Chapter 15**).

The text is structured so that Chapters 2 to 5 deal with what goes on in people's heads – cognitive processes and cognitive representations, including how we conceive of ourselves and how our attitudes are structured. Chapter 6 continues the attitude theme but focuses on how attitudes change and how people are persuaded. This leads directly into Chapter 7, which discusses more broadly how people influence one another. Because groups play a key role in social influence, Chapter 7 flows logically into Chapters 8 and 9, which deal with group processes including leadership. Chapters 10 and 11 broaden the discussion of groups to consider what happens between

groups – prejudice, discrimination, conflict and intergroup behaviour. The sad fact that intergroup behaviour so often involves conflict invites a discussion of human aggression, which is dealt with in Chapter 12.

Lest we become disillusioned with our species, Chapter 13 discusses how people can be altruistic and can engage in selfless prosocial acts of kindness and support. Continuing the general emphasis on more positive aspects of human behaviour, Chapter 14 deals with interpersonal relations, including attraction, friendship and love, but also with breakdowns in relationships. At the core of interpersonal interaction lies communication, of which spoken language is the richest form: Chapter 15 explores language and communication. Chapter 16 discusses the cultural context of social behaviour – an exploration of cultural differences, cross-cultural universals and the significance of culture in contemporary society.

Each chapter is self-contained, although integrated into the general logic of the entire text. There are plentiful cross-references to other chapters, and at the end of each chapter are references to further, more detailed coverage of topics covered by the chapter. We also suggest classic and contemporary literature, films and TV programs that deal with subject matter that is relevant to the chapter topic.

Many of the studies referred to in this text can be found in the social psychology journals that we have already noted in the historical section – check new issues of these journals to learn about up-to-date research. In addition, there are three social psychology journals that are dedicated to scholarly state-of-the-art summaries and reviews of topics in social psychology: *Advances in Experimental Social Psychology*, *Personality and Social Psychology Review* and *European Review of Social Psychology*. Topics in social psychology are also covered in general psychology theory and review journals such as *Annual Review of Psychology*, *Psychological Bulletin* and *Psychological Review*.

For a short general introduction to social psychology, see Hogg's (2000a) chapter in Pawlik and Rosenzweig's (2000) *International Handbook of Psychology*. For a stripped-down simple introductory European social psychology text that focuses on only the very essentials of the subject, see Hogg and Vaughan's (2010) *Essentials of Social Psychology*. In contrast, the most authoritative and detailed sources of information about social psychology are undoubtably the current handbooks of social psychology, of which there are four: (1) Fiske, Gilbert and Lindzey's (2010) *Handbook of Social Psychology*, which is currently in its fifth edition; (2) Hogg and Cooper's (2007) *The SAGE Handbook of Social Psychology: Concise Student Edition*; (3) Kruglanski and Higgins's (2007) *Social Psychology: Handbook of Basic Principles*, which is in its second edition; and (4) Hewstone and Brewer's four-volume *Blackwell Handbook of Social Psychology*, each volume of which is a stand-alone book with a different pair of editors: *Intraindividual Processes* by Tesser and Schwartz (2001), *Interpersonal Processes* by Fletcher and Clark (2001), *Group Processes* by Hogg and Tindale (2001) and *Intergroup Processes* by Brown and Gaertner (2001).

A wonderful source of shorter overview pieces is Baumeister and Vohs's (2007) two-volume, 1020-page *Encyclopedia of Social Psychology* – there are more than 550 entries written by an equal number of the leading social psychologists from around the world. Also keep your eyes out for Hogg's similarly comprehensive but more recent *Oxford Encyclopedia of Social Psychology* that is due to be published in 2017 or 2018. Two other, more topic-specific encyclopedias are Reis and Sprecher's (2009) *Encyclopedia of Human Relationships* and Levine and Hogg's (2010) *Encyclopedia of Group Processes and Intergroup Relations*. Finally, Hogg's (2003) *SAGE Benchmarks in Psychology: Social Psychology* is a four-volume edited and annotated collection of almost 80 benchmark research articles in social psychology – it contains many of the discipline's most influential classic works. The volumes are divided into sections with short introductions.

Summary

- Social psychology is the scientific investigation of how the thoughts, feelings and behaviour of individuals are influenced by the actual, imagined or implied presence of others. Although social psychology can also be described in terms of what it studies, it is more useful to describe it as a way of looking at human behaviour.

- Social psychology is a science. It employs the scientific method to study social behaviour. Although this involves a variety of empirical methods to collect data to test hypotheses and construct theories, experimentation is usually the preferred method as it is the best way to learn what causes what. Nevertheless, methods are matched to research questions, and methodological pluralism is highly valued.

- Social psychological data are usually transformed into numbers, which are analysed by statistical procedures. Statistics allow conclusions to be drawn about whether a research observation is a true effect or some chance event.

- Social psychology is enlivened by debate over the ethics of research methods, the appropriate research methods for an understanding of social behaviour, the validity and power of social psychology theories, and the type of theories that are properly social psychological.

- Although having origins in nineteenth-century German folk psychology and French crowd psychology, modern social psychology really began in the United States in the 1920s with the adoption of the experimental method. In the 1940s, Kurt Lewin provided significant impetus to social psychology, and the discipline has grown exponentially ever since.

- Despite its European origins, social psychology was quickly dominated by the United States – a process accelerated by the rise of fascism in Europe during the 1930s. However, since the late 1960s, there has been a rapid and sustained renaissance of European social psychology, driven by distinctively European intellectual and sociohistorical priorities to develop a more *social* social psychology with a greater emphasis on collective phenomena and group levels of analysis. European social psychology is now well established as an equal but complementary partner to the United States in social psychological research.

Key terms

Archival research	Evolutionary psychology	Neo-behaviourism
Behaviour	Evolutionary social psychology	Operational definition
Behaviourism	Experimental method	Positivism
Case study	Experimental realism	Radical behaviourist
Cognitive theories	Experimenter effects	Reductionism
Confirmation bias	External validity	Science
Confounding	fMRI	Social neuroscience
Correlation	Hypotheses	Social psychology
Data	Independent variables	Statistical significance
Demand characteristics	Internal validity	Statistics
Dependent variables	Laboratory	Subject effects
Discourse	Level of explanation	*t* test
Discourse analysis	Meta-theory	Theory
Double-blind	Mundane realism	*Völkerpsychologie*

Literature, film and TV

The Beach

The 1997 Alex Garland novel (also the 2000 eponymous film starring Leonardo DiCaprio). Backpackers in Thailand drop out to join a group that has set up its own normatively regimented society on a remote island. They are expected to submerge their own identity in favour of the group's identity. This dramatic book engages with many social psychological themes having to do with self and identity, close relationships, norms and conformity, influence and leadership, and conflict and cooperation. The book could be characterised as *Apocalypse Now* (Francis Ford Coppola's legendary 1979 war movie) meets *Lord of the Flies* (William Golding's classic 1954 novel about a group of boys marooned on an island).

War and Peace

Leo Tolstoy's (1869) masterpiece on the impact of society and social history on people's lives. It shows how macro- and micro-levels of analysis influence one another, but cannot be resolved into one another. It is a wonderful literary work of social psychology – how people's day-to-day lives are located at the intersection of powerful interpersonal, group and intergroup processes. Other classic novels of Leo Tolstoy, Emile Zola, Charles Dickens and George Eliot accomplish much the same social psychological analysis.

Les Misérables

Victor Hugo's (1862) magnum opus and classic literary masterpiece of the nineteenth century. It explores everyday life and relationships against the background of conventions, institutions and historical events in Paris over a 17-year period (1815–32). Those of you who enjoy musicals will know that it has been adapted into an eponymous 2012 musical film directed by Tom Hooper and starring Hugh Jackman (as the central character, Jean Valjean), Russell Crowe, Anne Hathaway and Amanda Seyfried.

Gulliver's Travels

Jonathan Swift's 1726 satirical commentary on the nature of human beings. This book is relevant to virtually all the themes in our text. The section on Big-Endians and Little-Endians is particularly relevant to Chapter 11 on intergroup behaviour. Swift provides a hilarious and incredibly full and insightful description of a society that is split on the basis of whether people open their boiled eggs at the big or the little end – relevant to the minimal group studies in Chapter 11 but also to the general theme of how humans can read so much into subtle features of their environment.

Reality TV

At the opposite end of the spectrum from *War and Peace* is 'reality TV' (e.g. *The Biggest Loser*, *My Kitchen Rules*, *The Farmer Wants a Wife*, *The Bachelor*, *The Bachelorette*), which is also, ultimately, all about social psychology – human interaction in groups, interpersonal relations and more.

Guided questions

1 What do social psychologists study? Can you give some examples of interdisciplinary research?

2 Sometimes experiments are used in social psychological research. Why?

3 What do you understand by levels of explanation in social psychology? What is meant by reductionism?

4 If you or your lecturer were to undertake research in social psychology, you would need to gain ethical approval. Why is this, and what criteria would need to be met?

5 If the shock level 'administered' in Milgram's obedience study had been 150 volts instead of the maximum 450 volts, would this have made the experiment more ethical?

Learn more

Allport, G. W. (1954). The historical background of modern social psychology. In G. Lindzey (Ed.), *Handbook of social psychology* (Vol. 1, pp. 3–56). Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley. Classic and often-cited account of the history of social psychology, covering the formative period up to the 1950s.

Aronson, E., Ellsworth, P. C., Carlsmith, J. M., & Gonzales, M. H. (1990). *Methods of research in social psychology* (2nd ed.). New York: McGraw-Hill. Detailed, well-written and now-classic coverage of research methods in social psychology.

Crano, W. D., & Brewer, M. B. (2015). *Principles and methods of social research* (3rd ed.). New York: Routledge. A detailed but very readable overview of research methods in social psychology.

Dawkins, R. (2011). *The magic of reality: How we know what's really true*. London: Bantam Press. Ethologist and evolutionary biologist Richard Dawkins argues that science does indeed aim to uncover what is real – whether it be an earthquake, a supernova, DNA or the nature of jealousy.

Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (Eds.) (2011). *The SAGE handbook of qualitative research* (4th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE. This academic bestseller is considered the gold standard for qualitative research methods.

Ellsworth, P. C., & Gonzales, R. (2007). Questions and comparisons: Methods of research in social psychology. In M. A. Hogg & J. Cooper (Eds.), *The SAGE handbook of social psychology: Concise student edition* (pp. 24–42). London: SAGE. A concise and readable overview of how one moves from research question to research itself in social psychology, and how one makes choices about methods.

Farr, R. M. (1996). *The roots of modern social psychology*: *1872–1954*. Oxford, UK: Blackwell. A scholarly and provocative discussion of the intellectual roots of modern social psychology. Farr is a renowned historical commentator on social psychology.

Goethals, G. R. (2007). A century of social psychology: Individuals, ideas, and investigations. In M. A. Hogg & J. Cooper (Eds.), *The SAGE handbook of social psychology* (pp. 3–23). London: SAGE. A very readable, comprehensive and inclusive coverage of the history of social psychology.

Howell, D. C. (2010). *Statistical methods for psychology* (8th ed.). Belmont, CA: Duxbury. Highly respected and often-used basic introduction to psychological statistics. With the usual equations and formulae that we all love so much, it is also easy to read.

Jones, E. E. (1998). Major developments in five decades of social psychology. In D. T. Gilbert, S. T. Fiske, & G. Lindzey (Eds.), *The handbook of social psychology* (4th edn, Vol. 1, pp. 3–57). Boston, MA: McGraw-Hill. This treatment recaps and moves on from Allport's (1954) treatment, covering the period from 1935 to 1985. In addition to classical developments, it also covers the growth of research on social comparison, cognitive dissonance, attitude change, conformity, person perception and attribution.

Rosnow, R. L., & Rosenthal, R. (1997). *People studying people: Artifacts and ethics in behavioral research*. New York: Freeman. An introduction to notable biases that can distort research on human behaviour. There is also coverage of ethical issues.

Ross, L., Lepper, M., & Ward, A. (2010). History of social psychology: Insights, challenges, and contributions to theory and application. In S. T. Fiske, D. T. Gilbert, & G. Lindzey (Eds.), *Handbook of social psychology* (5th ed., Vol. 1, pp. 3–50). New York: Wiley. The most recent overview and account of the history of social psychology.

Sansone, C., Morf, C. C., & Panter, A. T. (Eds.) (2004). *The SAGE handbook of methods in social psychology*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE. At over 550 pages and 22 chapters, this is a comprehensive coverage of quantitative and qualitative research methods in social psychology, including discussion of research ethics, program development, cultural sensitivities and doing interdisciplinary and applied research.

Tabachnik, B. G., & Fidell, L. S. (2013). *Using multivariate statistics* (6th ed.). Boston, MA: Pearson. The acknowledged 'bible' for doing, interpreting and reporting multivariate statistics in psychology.

Van Lange, P. A. M., Kruglanski, A. W., & Higgins, E. T. (Eds.) (2013). *Handbook of theories of social psychology*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE. All the major theories in social psychology are here, described clearly and concisely by experts in the theory or by the theorists themselves.