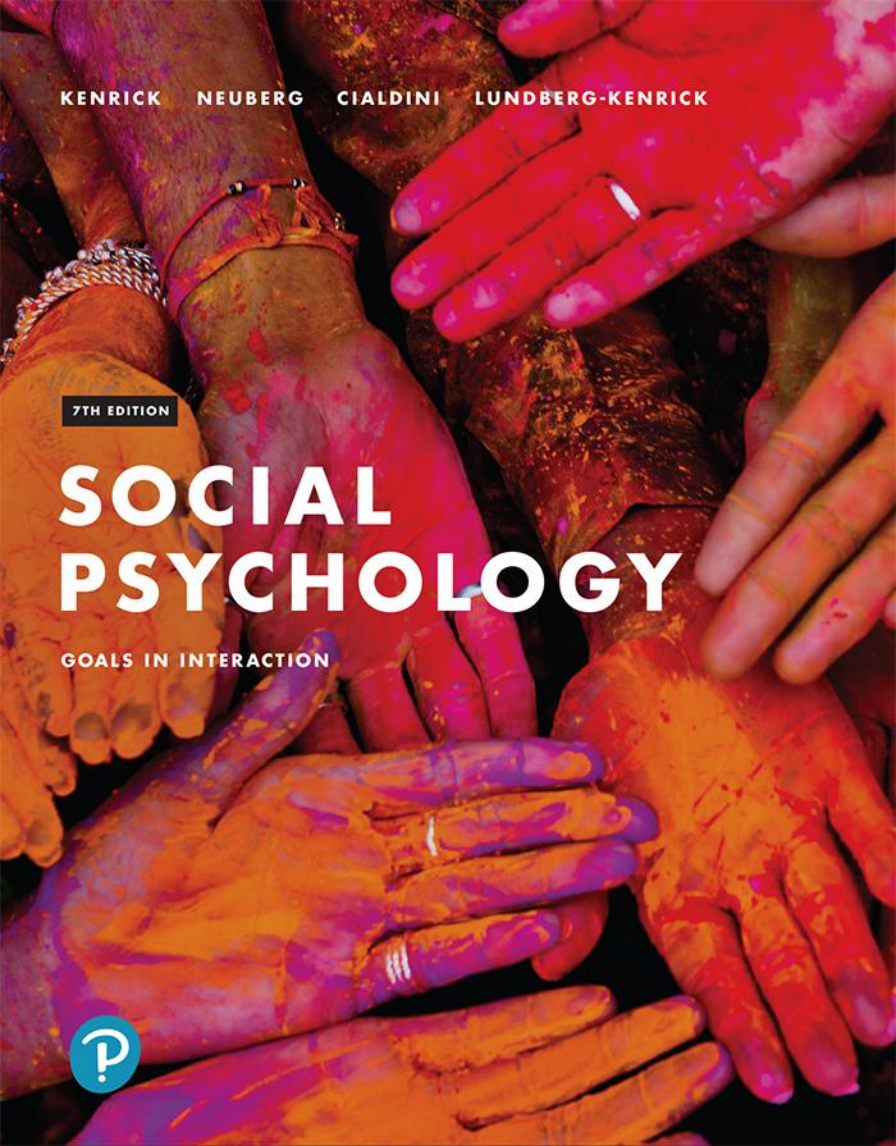
KENRICK NEUBERG CIALDINI LUNDBERG-KENRICK

7TH EDITION

SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY

GOALS IN INTERACTION



Social Psychology

Goals in Interaction

SEVENTH EDITION

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To Liam and Carol

To Erika, Rachel, Zachary, and Elliot

To Bobette, Christopher, and Jason

To Finian and Greta

Brief Contents

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Preface

Social psychology is, quite simply, a lot of fun. Indeed, to students assigned a typical social psychology textbook, the field must sometimes seem like an amazing three-ring circus, where every turn of the eye reveals a dizzying assortment of attention-demanding performances. A different show unfolds in each ring—awe-inspiring acts of altruism, shocking deeds of aggression, persuasive tricks from magicians' hats, human pyramids of cooperation, and mysterious feats of self-delusion. At the center of it all stands the course instructor, the ringmaster, calling students' attention alternately to one then another facet of the spectacle—*And now, ladies and gentlemen, I invite you to shift your gaze from the clownish antics of self-deception to the daring men and women attempting to traverse the tightrope of romantic love, and then back down to the wild lion pit of aggression.*

The Need for an Integrative Approach to Social Psychology

But there's a problem with the three-ring circus presentation of social psychology. It masks a critically important point: Human social behaviors are woven together in related, interconnected patterns. To present an array of separate, disjointed chapter topics—aggression here, persuasion, prejudice, and personal relationships there, there, and there—offers a sorely inadequate view of the field. Hidden beneath all the dazzling aspects of human social behavior, there is a central set of common concepts, dimensions, and principles. Discovering those underlying principles should be the student's central quest. After all, a primary rule of learning and memory is that people grasp and retain more material, more easily, when the various parts can be connected by organizing principles.

As entertaining and stimulating as a circus may be, it is not a good arena for learning. Much better, and equally engaging, is a well-constructed work of theater, cinema, or literature. The field of social psychology should be presented to students as a captivating and coherent chronicle, not a bewildering circus. It's an intricate chronicle to be sure, rich in twists and variations. But it is coherent nonetheless, with recurring characters, scenes, and themes linking its elements. Our major purpose in writing this material is to offer students and instructors a cohesive framework that retains social psychology's renowned ability to captivate student interest but that adds the more intellectually helpful (and satisfying) feature of integration.

How Do We Accomplish the Integration?

For a full year before deciding to write this book, we met for an afternoon every week to try to develop a truly integrative framework for the course. We had one ironic advantage: In a basic way, we disagreed with one another. Each of us had approached the task with a different one of the major, sometimes opposing, theoretical perspectives in social psychology today—social cognition, social learning, and evolutionary psychology. We realized that if we could find an overarching framework that would bridge our diverse approaches, it would provide an especially broad foundation for integrating the course material—one that allowed and incorporated a full range of theoretical starting points.

Those meetings were an exhilarating mix of good-natured conflicts, eye-opening insights, false starts, blind alleys, and gratifying breakthroughs—always accompanied by the shared sense that our understanding of social psychology was growing. The effort would have been worthwhile even if no book had come of it. At the end of that year of discussion and debate, not only did we have an invaluable mid-career learning experience under our belts, but, as well, we had consensus on an integrative framework about which we were all genuinely enthusiastic.

The subtitle, "Goals in Interaction," reflects the two key themes that we use to tie together the material within and across chapter topics:

1. The goal-directed nature of social behavior. First, we stress that people's social behaviors are goal directed. People might not even be able to consciously describe their goals, but when they obey an authority figure, begin a new relationship, or raise a fist against another, they do so in the service of some goal—perhaps to gain another's approval, verify a self-image, or acquire social status. In Chapter 1, we describe how everyday goals flow from fundamental social motives, such as establishing social ties, attracting mates, and understanding ourselves and those around us. In Chapter 2, we examine how goals work. In each succeeding chapter, we reestablish this emphasis on goals by asking the question "What particular goals would it serve to be aggressive, or to conform to other people's opinions, or to express prejudice against the members of another group (or whichever particular behaviors we consider in that chapter)?"

2. The interaction of the person and the situation. Second, to fully understand the causes of a person's social behavior, we need to consider how aspects of that person interact with aspects of his or her situation. How do features inside the individual—attitudes, traits, expectations, attributions, moods, goals, stereotypes, and emotions—work together with features of the situation to influence social behavior? Beginning with Kurt Lewin, this interactionist theme has been prominent in our field. Unfortunately, introductory social psychology texts have rarely engaged the full explanatory power of interactionism. In contrast, in this book we continuously invite readers to consider the interplay of influences inside and outside the person.

Bridging Perspectives: Cognition, Culture, and Evolution

For the last several decades, social psychologists have profitably mined the cognitive perspective for insights into how humans process information about their social situations. These insights added to a foundation of findings discovered within the social learning perspective. In recent years, as researchers have made fascinating discoveries about social behavior in different human cultures and different animal species, the sociocultural and evolutionary perspectives have increasingly contributed to the mix.

The sociocultural perspective has emphasized how our social thoughts and behaviors are encompassed within the larger context of the societies we live in. Cultural influences can change the answer to questions about which techniques of persuasion will be effective, whether a person will define herself in terms of her group memberships or her individual qualities, or whether that person will marry one partner or many. The study of culture is fascinating because it often highlights differences, and reminds us that "our way" isn't always the only way.

But cross-cultural research has also taught us that humans the world over have some common ways of thinking and behaving around one another. The evolutionary perspective has helped us understand why there are similarities not only across human cultures, but even across different species. Initial forays into evolutionary psychology emphasized the darker side of human nature—"selfish genes" driving aggression, sexuality, and the battle between the sexes. But evolutionary analyses have revealed that our ancestors survived not just by selfish competition but also by positive behaviors: forming friendships, cooperating with other members of their groups, and forging loving family bonds.

It has become clear that these various perspectives are not "alternatives" to one another. Instead, they work together to enable a fuller understanding of the social world. As long-term students of cognition, culture, and evolutionary psychology, we have woven these threads together into the unique interactionist tapestry of this book. In this edition, we emphasize how social psychology is an important bridge discipline, connecting different areas of psychology (such as neuroscience, developmental psychology, and clinical psychology) as well as other behavioral sciences (such as anthropology, economics, political science, and zoology).

What's New in the Seventh Edition?

Although the fundamental motives driving human social relationships have not changed in the two decades since this book was first published, there have been some dramatic changes in how technology affects the way people interact with one another and the way information can be presented to students. Several of our new features in the text and Revel are designed to connect those changes to social psychology.

- **Social Cyberpsychology.** Just a few decades ago, almost all social interactions were face-to-face. In the 1970s, you could communicate with someone else using a telephone, but long-distance calls were expensive enough to keep those contacts to an absolute minimum. Email and the Internet began to change all that, but in just the last decade smartphones have made it so teenagers now interact more online than they do face-to-face, as we discuss in Chapter 7. People not only stay in constant touch with their friends and relatives via text messaging and videochatting, but many people now begin, and often maintain, their romantic relationships online. Of the more than 300 new references in this edition, a large percentage deal with the social psychological consequences of these technological changes. Throughout the chapters, we'll cover research addressing how social media is used for self-presentation, cyberslacking on the job, creating false consensus about controversial issues, and other topics. For example, in Chapter 10, we discuss why the usual sex difference in aggression is diminished in online cyberbullying.

Chapter-by-Chapter Updates

- Chapter 1 now opens with the amazing story of Malala Yousafzai, a 15-year-old Pakistani girl who was riding home on the school bus one day, when a man suddenly jumped on board and shot her in the head. She had been targeted by local fundamentalist clerics for advocating education for girls. Miraculously, she survived, but did not give up her fight, and went on to become the youngest person ever to win the Nobel Peace Prize. Malala's heroic story touches on many of the topics we will cover throughout the book, including culture, prejudice, aggression, sex roles, and positive social psychology. Chapter 1 includes a new research video,

in which Lani Shiota describes her research on how our cultural backgrounds influence the way we experience the feeling of love. We have also added over 40 new references to Chapter 1, including research on cultural influences on how children think in the classroom, on the link between cultural variations in disease proneness and social inequality, and on law and social psychology. We also added a new section on "replication, alternative explanations, and scientific skepticism."

- Chapter 2 includes a new research video in which Jessica Tracy describes her research indicating that smiling can actually make you less attractive (if you are a man). The chapter also includes 19 new references, covering topics including a new taxonomy of positive emotions, how "mindful attention" can override distracting emotions, how Facebook viewing can undermine self-esteem, how people present themselves online, how the presence of others can disrupt brain activity, and how the mere presence of a cell phone can be distracting.
- Chapter 3 includes almost 20 new references and some updates on the opening vignette (when we originally wrote it, Hillary Clinton was a senator, who elicited wildly different perceptions from different people, those perceptual discrepancies were amplified recently when she ran for president). Some of the new findings in Chapter 3 include research on the effects of social class on social cognition, on the ways that social media can influence social comparison processes, and on cross-cultural differences in self-esteem.
- Chapter 4 includes almost 30 new research references and a new research video in which Joey Cheng talks about dominance versus prestige as pathways to status. We cover interesting new findings on online self-presentation, on the links between flexible self-presentations and psychological well-being, on how lawyers manage their clients' self-presentations in the courtroom, and on brain activities distinguishing shyness and social anxiety. We also have included a new section on research on narcissism.
- Chapter 5 includes 24 new references and includes discussions of the use of social media in advertising, and on links between neuroscience and attitudes and persuasion, including brain differences between conservatives and liberals. We also talk about new research on self-defining attitudes, on using the theory of planned behavior to predict cyberslacking at work, on factors predicting responses to "fake news," on false consensus on social media, and on the creation of "illusory truth" through repetition of news stories. We also include a more extensive discussion of implicit attitudes.
- Chapter 6 includes new research on developmental changes in susceptibility to social influence in children and teenagers, on the links between powerlessness and trust in authorities, on sex differences in responses to being labelled as helpful, and on the effects of self-esteem on conformity.
- Chapter 7 includes 26 new references and discussions on virtual friendships, on physiological links with affiliation and loneliness, on some down sides of female friendships, on national differences in friendship linked to military threats, on several facets of Facebook friendships, and on the links between self-actualization and affiliation motives.
- Chapter 8 includes 33 new references, as well a new research video in which University of Michigan's Josh Ackerman talks about sex differences in how people feel about hearing "I love you" before versus after first having sex. Some of the new research includes findings on women's abilities to detect ovulation in other women, on the links between sociosexual orientation and the use of "hook up" apps, on how population sex ratios affect the number of uncommitted sexual encounters, on the links between attachment style and the inclination to cybersnoop on one's partner, and on the effects of the economy on the kinds of men women prefer as husbands.
- Chapter 9 covers recent research on how proximity and residential mobility influence helpfulness, how social class affects the motives for helping, how charitable acts are viewed as more moral if they make the altruist feel good, how focusing of religious ideals increases helpfulness toward other groups, and how giving away things that one regards as part of oneself makes people more likely to act generously in the future.
- Chapter 10 includes almost 30 new references, discussing research on new estimates of sex differences in homicide and self-defensive violence in relationships, and a surprising lack of sex differences in cyberbullying. We also discuss recent meta-analyses of the weapons effect and the effects of violent pornography, as well research investigating how some groups encourage violence, and links between depression and mass murders. Other recent research suggests changes in brain connectivity from playing violent video games, and an interaction between testosterone and cortisol levels in predicting aggressive behavior.
- Chapter 11 includes 22 new references as well a new research video in which Toni Schmader of the University of British Columbia describes some research on how to reduce the effects of stereotype threat. We describe how, despite the media coverage of ethnic, religious, sexual, and racial conflict, the general

trend over recent decades has been toward increasing tolerance. We discuss the controversy over the recent emphasis on "micro-aggressions," research on sexual harassment in online video games, racial disparities in health care, findings that some racial stereotypes can be erased by information about a person's ecological background, new research on deindividuation, and findings on prejudice against atheists and sexually unrestricted individuals.

- Chapter 12 includes a new research video in which Jessica Salerno describes her studies investigating how a nonconforming juror's anger influences other jurors differently, depending on whether the one angry person is a man or a woman. The chapter also includes over 20 new references to research on how being in a group can enhance memory as well as prejudice; how group symbols can make group members feel more formidable; links between narcissism, charisma, and leadership; when dominance behaviors can differentially influence responses to male versus female leaders; and how to reduce dishonesty in organizations. As in most of the other chapters, we've included new research on social cyberpsychology, including some findings that technology can sometimes decrease group polarization.
- Chapter 13 includes new references to research on cooperation, conflict, and global social problems, including new findings challenging traditional selfish *homo economicus* assumptions, findings on social dominance and dehumanization, how groups respond to being dehumanized by dehumanizing other groups, and how hopefulness increases cooperative decisions in groups.
- Chapter 14 includes a new video in which Jaimie Krems discusses her research on how our social relationships are linked to psychological well-being and purpose in life. The last chapter also discusses interesting new work on how disease epidemics influence women's desire for multiple sexual partners, the links between "sexual afterglow" and long-term relationship satisfaction, and how status concerns influence "selfies" people post online.

New Revel Features

In this edition, we are able to offer a number of new interactive features in Revel designed to help students understand and learn chapter content:

- **Social Psychology on a Screen Near You.** In 1950, only a tiny percentage of homes had television sets. You had to leave your house to see a movie, and if you missed it, tough luck. Now you can instantly download *Black Panther, Gone with the Wind*, or an entire season of *Mad Men* straight to your phone. There's an endless stream of social psychology unfolding in movies, television shows, and ads, but students don't always see the connection. We encourage students to make those links in our fun new feature *Social Psychology on a Screen Near You*. What students watch changes every month, every week, even every day. That's why we're updating this feature throughout the year to keep on top of what's current in movies, TV, and social psychology research.
- **Opening Mystery Videos.** In the last edition, we added opening videos to introduce the mysteries of social life we try to unravel in the chapter. These have been updated in several ways. For example, Chapter 1 now begins with the story of Malala Yousafzai, the teenager who was shot advocating education for girls, and received the Nobel Peace Prize. We discuss how Malala's case raises questions we'll address throughout the book, about how culture influences gender and other aspects of social life, and how a person's traits interact with his or her life situations to determine his or her behaviors.
- **New Research Videos.** Social psychologists not only probe into some of the most fascinating mysteries of social life, but they do so with scientific methods that are, in themselves, quite fascinating. In our videos, we introduce researchers from around the world who briefly describe one of the questions they were able to answer with their research. For example,
  - To accompany the first chapter's opening mystery, Liz Dunn from the University of British Columbia describes her work on the benefits of giving money away, including some fascinating new cross-cultural and developmental twists on the topic.
  - In the chapter on groups, Mark Van Vugt from Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam describes his work on leadership, explaining how, contrary to stereotypes, people are much more likely to choose female leaders over males under the right circumstances.
  - In the chapter on social dilemmas, Texas Christian University's Sarah Hill describes some fascinating research demonstrating how economic factors can influence White people's tendencies to perceive a "mixed-race" person as either Black or White.
  - And for the chapter on self-presentation, University of Queensland's Bill Von Hippel describes some research he conducted in a skateboard park, demonstrating how the mere presence of a beautiful young woman boosted male skateboarders' testosterone levels, which in turn led them to literally risk their necks doing more dangerous tricks.

In this edition, we've added several new videos. For example,

- Joey Cheng from the University of Illinois describes her research on the different behaviors people use to gain status through prestige versus dominance.
- University of Oklahoma's Jaimie Krems talks about her research linking status, affiliation, and self-actualization.
- Arizona State University's Lani Shiota talks about how cultural differences between Asian Americans and European Americans influence their experience of love.

- **What Do You Think?** At the start of every chapter, students are asked a survey question designed to prime the concepts they'll be reading about. For example, at the start of Chapter 2, students are asked to choose one word or phrase to answer the question "Who are you?" Then they categorize their answer as reflecting a personality trait, a physical characteristic, a link to their family, their cultural background, etc. After answering, students get to see how other students in their class responded.
- **Shared Writing.** At the end of each chapter, students are asked to revisit what they just learned and to apply that new knowledge to the chapter's opening mystery or to solving a real-world problem. For example, after reading Chapter 10 (about aggression), students are asked to imagine they have a younger brother or sister who is getting in trouble for acting aggressively at school and then to consult the chapter for research-backed suggestions to help their sibling control his or her aggressive tendencies.

The Structure of Each Chapter

After introducing social psychology (Chapter 1) and taking a closer look at the person and the social situation (Chapter 2), we organize the remaining chapters around a common structure:

1. **The Mystery.** Each chapter begins with an account of a baffling pattern of human behavior—an incident or a set of incidents that seems beyond understanding. For example,
   - Why did the beautiful and talented artist Frida Kahlo fall for the much older, and much less attractive, Diego Rivera, and then tolerate his numerous extramarital affairs?
   - What forces could persuade a young man to sign a confession saying he'd killed his own mother, when later evidence suggested he could not possibly have done it?
   - How did a Black civil rights advocate and a member of the Ku Klux Klan turn around and become friends with one another?

   Later, as the chapter progresses, we introduce general principles of human behavior that, when put together properly, resolve the mystery. These mysteries are more than simple devices for engaging readers' interest. They are designed to convey something basic about how we approach the chapter material: Our approach is heavily research based, and research is akin to good detective work. Researchers, like detectives, begin their search with an interesting or perplexing question, then examine clues, gather evidence, test hypotheses, eliminate alternatives and—if things fall into place—uncover the right answer. To mine these instructive parallels, we return often in the text to the concept of researcher-as-detective.
2. **The Goals.** Next we introduce readers to the set of goals underlying the behavior covered in the chapter by asking, "What purposes does this behavior (e.g., aggression or helping or conformity) serve for an individual?" and "Which factors lead an individual to use this behavior to achieve those goals?" Taking each goal of the set in turn, we consider factors in the person, in the situation, and in their interaction:

   PERSON ***The person.*** Here, we present research showing which factors inside the individual trigger each particular goal. So, which traits motivate people to seek social approval through conformity? Which moods influence people to think deeply in order to understand themselves and others more accurately?

   SITUATION ***The situation.*** Here, we consider evidence of situational factors that trigger each goal. How do personal threats engage self-protective prejudices? How do cultural norms influence the desire to seek sexual gratification through casual relationships? How does time pressure affect the inclination to think deeply before deciding what a stranger's personality is like?

   INTERACTION ***The person–situation interaction.*** In this section, we present data demonstrating how personal and situational factors interact. Social psychologists are used to thinking about how people with different attitudes, expectations, and traits act differently in the same situation. But interactions are much richer than this. People choose their life situations, change situations they do not like, and are themselves rejected from some situations and changed by others. For example, lonely people sometimes act in needy ways that alienate others. In turn, others may avoid them and stop inviting them to social events, fur-

ther enhancing their inner feelings of social isolation. By systematically showing students the importance of person–situation interactions, we hope to illustrate the limitations of the usual single-factor explanations—such as putting all the blame for aggression or blind obedience on the person or the converse error of viewing people as interchangeable pawns on a giant interpersonal chess board.

3. **Special Features.** Several of social psychology's messages and themes are highlighted in each chapter's special features:
   - ***Investigation.*** Building on our metaphor of social psychologist as detective, we invite students to connect themselves to the concepts in the "Investigation" feature. These questions encourage students to enter an investigation, either by piecing together the concepts and findings in the chapters with what they know about themselves or other people, or by using their own powers of logical analysis to critically analyze the evidence just covered. "Investigation" questions are designed not only to emphasize the relevance of social psychology to students' lives but also to help students study more effectively. Research on learning and memory shows we learn material more easily if we connect it to ourselves, think critically about it, and actively rehearse what we've just read.
   - ***Bridging Theory and Application.*** Here, we discuss how a specific experimental finding or body of findings relates to real-world issues—how research insights can be used to create less-prejudiced classrooms, help married couples stay together, or reduce violence.
   - ***Bridging Function and Dysfunction.*** Psychology students are fascinated by disordered behavior. In this feature, we tap that fascination to demonstrate broader principles. We examine how normally healthy social behaviors can, if taken too far, produce unhealthy consequences—for example, how the usually adaptive tendency to develop strong bonds between lovers can underlie obsessive relationships.
4. **Revisiting the Mystery.** The final section of each chapter returns to the opening mystery to help students pull together the various research findings discussed in the chapter. For example, we return to the puzzle of the boy who falsely confessed to a heinous crime and the relationship between Frida Kahlo and Diego Rivera, in light of research findings on persuasion and relationships (and we pull together the new clues we revealed in the chapter). In this way, we hope not only to capitalize on curiosity but also to tap another general principle of learning and memory—the principle that students recall more facts when they are connected to vivid cases.

Weaving Methods and Applications into the Story

A glance at the table of contents shows that we have included no separate applications chapters on such topics as health, business, or the law. This is not because of any lack of regard for their importance within social psychology. Quite the reverse. Rather than giving these topics a tagged-on, stand-alone status, we want to emphasize their frequent connections to the mainstream topics of the field. Consequently, we point out these links as they occur naturally within the chapter discussion, and (when special elaboration is appropriate) in the *Bridging Theory and Application* features found in the chapters. In this way, we hope to convey to students the inherent relationship between the principles of social psychology and the behaviors of people in workplaces, schoolrooms, and other applied settings.

For similar reasons, there is no isolated chapter or appendix on methodology. Although we do expose the reader to the major methodological issues of social psychological research in Chapter 1, we blend the discussion of methods with the puzzling research questions that inspire those methods, so the student learns the details of the methods that can answer them (for example, we introduce the idea of meta-analysis alongside the many studies of media influences on aggression). Additionally, the student learns to appreciate that one cannot be fully confident in the results of a study without understanding how those results were obtained.

Last, and once again reflecting our emphasis on integration, the chapters are not grouped and divided into separate sections, such as social knowing, social influence, and social relationships. Instead, the chapter topics flow in a continuum from phenomena occurring primarily inside the individual to those occurring primarily outside. However, there is no imperative to this ordering and, with the exception of the first and last chapters, instructors may sequence the chapters to fit their own preferences without harm to student understanding.

One reason for this adaptability is that the integration we have proposed does not depend on any lock-step, building-block progress through the course material. Rather, that integration comes from a pair of concepts, *goals* and the *person–situation interaction*, that apply generally to the topics of the course. Although the goals may not be the same, the ways that goals function—the mechanisms by which they develop and operate—are similar in the case of aggression or attraction or self-presentation or any of the

social behaviors we consider. And, although the particular factors may differ depending on the behavior under study, understanding how factors in the person interact with factors in the situation provides the most informed insights into the causes of everyday social behaviors—whatever the behaviors, in whichever order they are considered. Our two central concepts, then, allow an organization that we think is both integrative and flexible.

In the chapters that follow, readers will find everyday social behaviors depicted as something more tightly woven and interconnected than a three-ring circus. Beyond being "the greatest show on earth," social psychology may well be the greatest story—breathtaking, coherent, and, most of all, instructive. We hope you will agree.

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In addition to the new features in Revel we discussed earlier, Revel allows us to supplement student learning in several ways:

- ***End-of-Module Quizzes.*** At the end of every major section, students are asked three quiz questions to test their understanding of the material they just read and are given immediate feedback.
- ***End-of-Chapter Quizzes.*** At the end of each chapter, there is a longer quiz, in which the student tests his or her understanding of the material and gets immediate feedback.
- ***Social Explorer.*** A number of the graphs and tables in the text are now interactive, asking students to predict research findings before they see them displayed and to dig deeper into the data.
- ***Interactives.*** A variety of interactives bring static content such as figures, tables, and photos to life in Revel.
- ***Investigation.*** The Investigation questions prompt students to think more deeply about chapter content and how it relates to their experiences through written responses that feed directly to the gradebook.

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In writing this book, we have searched for interesting real-world events and stories to help illustrate the concepts of social psychology. Several people were able to help us go beyond what was already available in published books and articles, and we greatly appreciate their efforts: Dr. Avrum Bluming, Lenell Geter, Steven Hassan, Bradley Henry, Cindy Jackson, Darlene and Bob Krueger, Eric Saul, and Rabbi Marvin Tokayer.

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About the Authors

For over 10 years, Douglas Kenrick, Steven Neuberg, and Robert Cialdini met weekly over enchiladas, shwarma, or pasta to design experiments and debate the big issues in social psychology. Over time, they came to realize that they agreed on several important things and that these ideas could form the foundation of an integrative and exciting social psychology textbook. The authors each have years of experience teaching social psychology to undergraduate and graduate students, in environments ranging from small private colleges to large public universities. They have published research in the field's most prestigious journals on a wide range of topics, including social cognition, self-presentation, persuasion and social influence, friendship and romance, helping, aggression, and prejudice and stereotyping. Each is independently recognized for integrative research that, when combined, inspires the two major themes of the book. This textbook brings together their many teaching and research interests. David Lundberg-Kenrick has been assisting with multimedia features since he was a film student at New York University (NYU), and was brought on board as a coauthor to develop the films and other interactive components for the digital version, and to help bridge the increasing connections between social behavior and modern digital technology. He developed the new feature *Social Psychology on a Screen Near You*, in which we connect social psychological research to currently popular movies, TV shows, advertisements, social media, and those personal video screens you are carrying around in your pockets.

Douglas T. Kenrick is President's Professor at Arizona State University (ASU). He received his B.A. from Dowling College and his Ph.D. from Arizona State University. He taught at Montana State University for 4 years before returning to ASU. His research has been published in a number of prestigious outlets, including *Psychological Review, Behavioral and Brain Sciences, American Psychologist, Handbook of Social Psychology, Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, Current Directions in Psychological Science, Perspectives on Psychological Science*, and *Personality and Social Psychology Review.* He is the author of the 2011 book *Sex, Murder, and the Meaning of Life: A Psychologist Investigates How Evolution, Cognition, and Complexity Are Revolutionizing Our View of Human Nature*, and in 2013, with Vlad Griskevicius, he wrote *The Rational Animal: How Evolution Made Us Smarter Than We Think*. He has also published articles in the *New York Times* and *Scientific American* magazine. He has taught a graduate course on teaching psychology, and he thoroughly enjoys teaching undergraduate sections of social psychology, for which he has won several teaching awards.

Steven L. Neuberg is Foundation Professor of Psychology at Arizona State University. He received his undergraduate degree from Cornell University and his graduate degrees from Carnegie-Mellon University. He spent a postdoctoral year at the University of Waterloo in Canada and has since taught at ASU. Neuberg's research has been published in outlets such as *Advances in Experimental Social Psychology, Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, Psychological Science, Handbook of Social Psychology*, and *Perspectives on Psychological Science*, and has been supported by the National Institute of Mental Health and the National Science Foundation. He has received a half dozen teaching honors, including his college's Outstanding Teaching Award and the ASU Honors College Outstanding Honors Disciplinary Faculty Award. He has served on federal grant review panels and as associate editor of the *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology* and teaches a graduate course on teaching social psychology.

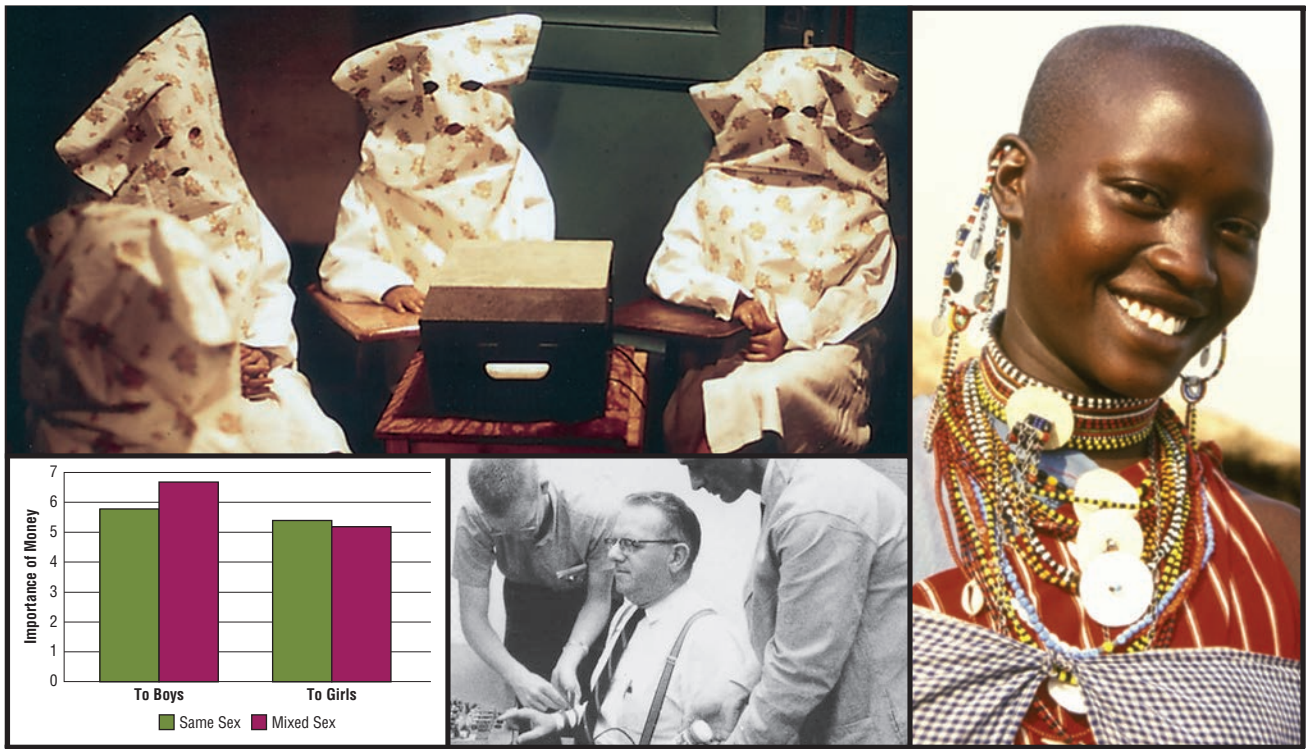
Robert B. Cialdini is Regents' Professor Emeritus at Arizona State University, where he has also been named Graduate Distinguished Professor. He received his undergraduate degree from the University of Wisconsin and his graduate degrees from the University of North Carolina. He is a past president of the *Society of Personality and Social Psychology* and has received the Society's award for *Distinguished Scientific Contributions*. His research has appeared in numerous publications, including *Handbook of Social Psychology, Advances in Experimental Social Psychology*, and *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*. His book, *Influence: Science and Practice*, has sold over 2 million copies and has appeared in 28 languages.

David Lundberg-Kenrick is media outreach manager for the ASU psychology department, which involves filming psychologists discussing the implications of their research for careers, families, and other aspects of everyday life. He received a B.F.A. from New York University's Tisch School of the Arts, where he won a Wasserman Production Award. For the past 12 years he has worked as an animator, video editor, and video producer. Dave has over a decade of experience editing videos for various companies, including Pearson Education, Axiom Media Productions, and Arizona State University. He has shot footage for various documentaries and television shows on the BBC, the Discovery Channel, and SBS Australia. Dave was brought in to help the transition from the old paper textbook format to the new interactive electronic format. He produced the short research videos found throughout the new edition, in which active researchers from around the world share their findings in a lively animated format.

Social Psychology

Chapter 1

Introduction to Social Psychology



(top left) Philip G. Zimbardo, Inc.; (right) David Keith Jones/Images of Africa Photobank/Alamy Stock Photo; (bottom) Alexandra Milgram

Outline

Learning Objectives

LO 1.1 Explain the role of description and theory in the science of social psychology.

LO 1.2 Summarize the four major theoretical perspectives of social psychology, and discuss how they work together to explain human social behavior.

LO 1.3 Describe the five fundamental motives behind goal-oriented social behavior, and explain what is meant by the person, the situation, and person–situation interactions.

LO 1.4 List the strengths and weaknesses of each of the different descriptive methods (e.g., naturalistic observation, case study) and experimental methods, and explain why researchers find value in combining different methods.

LO 1.5 Discuss the links between social psychology and (1) other disciplines of psychology and (2) disciplines outside psychology.

The Mysteries of Social Life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On October 9, 2012, fifteen-year-old Malala Yousafzai was riding the school bus home from a day of exams. Although her school was within easy walking distance of her home, Malala had begun taking the bus because her mother was concerned for her safety. The bus had just passed a checkpoint set up by the Pakistani army, and then turned a corner and driven past a deserted cricket field. At that point, a young man with a long beard stepped in front of the bus and waved it down, asking the driver whether this was the Khushal School bus. This was a strange question because the name of the school was written in large letters on the side of the bus. The young man next told the bus driver he needed information about some of the children, to which the driver responded that the man would have to check with the school's office. As the first man distracted the bus driver, another young man, whose face was covered with a handkerchief, boarded the back of the bus, and demanded to know which of the children on board was named Malala. Although none of the other girls said anything, several of them looked at her, and she was the only girl on the bus not wearing a cover over her face. The man then pulled out a black pistol and, with his hands shaking, fired three shots in her direction. The first bullet hit Malala in the head and went into her left eye socket. As her body slumped down on top of two other girls, the next two bullets hit one of her friends in the shoulder and another girl in the right arm.

The violent attack on Malala was not a complete surprise. She had been targeted by an influential fundamentalist cleric named Maulana Fazlullah, who preached on the local talk radio station. What horrendous crime would justify a religious leader calling for a teenage girl's assassination?

Malala's offense, as it turns out, was to publicly defend the right of young girls to go to school. Although this might not sound like much of a justification for murder, Fazlullah and his followers believed firmly that it was sinful for girls to receive a formal education—so sinful, in fact, that they were willing to blow up schools and even murder the students who disagreed with them. In the region of Pakistan where Malala was attacked, armed Taliban members regularly patrolled the streets and markets, threatening citizens who wore Western clothing and brutally beating up women who neglected to cover up their faces when they went out in public.

Malala chose to defy the Taliban's education ban, and to do so publicly. Even after she had been threatened numerous times, she continued to speak out about the importance of girls having access to schooling, and to make matters worse, she refused to cover her face when she went out in public.

Although she was shot in the head and very nearly died from her wounds, Malala survived. Rather than give up in the face of terrorism, though, she continued to speak out against the Taliban, giving speeches opposing violence and militarism, and in favor of governments spending less of their money on guns and more on books. A year later, she addressed the United Nations, calling for free education for children all around the world. Two years later, Malala became the youngest person ever to win the Nobel Peace Prize.

Malala's story raises a number of intriguing questions about the roots of human social behavior. To what extent are the different expectations for girls' and boys' behavior the products of local cultural norms as opposed to byproducts of a more universal human nature? What causes some people to engage in aggressive violence, and whole groups to take up arms against one another?

Besides raising questions about sexism and violence, Malala's case also leads us to ponder the positive aspects of human social behavior. What leads some people, like Malala, to be courageous in the face of injustice and repression, and to be willing to dedicate their lives to help others? Although the daily news is filled with stories about conflict and selfishness, every day people all around the world go out of their way to help one another; make one another laugh; cook meals for one another; labor together to uncover scientific discoveries; and inspire one another with creative works of art, music, and architecture.

In this book we will explore not only broad questions about human nature, but also everyday mysteries about love and hatred, generosity and aggression, and heroism and betrayal. Why do we react generously and lovingly toward some of the people we meet (and in some situations), but defensively or aggressively toward others? What are the roots of romance versus parental love? How can we get our coworkers to cooperate with us? How can we get along with our romantic partners? Why do some people make better leaders? How are our reactions to other people affected by our cultural background, by our early experiences, by our sex, and by neurochemical events in our brains?

Most of us try to solve mysteries like these by devouring news stories and books or chatting with friends about our feelings and opinions. Social psychologists go a step further in their detective work; they apply the systematic methods of scientific inquiry.

What Is Social Psychology?

LO 1.1 Explain the role of description and theory in the science of social psychology.

Social psychology is the scientific study of how people's thoughts, feelings, and behaviors are influenced by other people. What does it mean, though, to say that social psychology is "scientific"?

1.1.1 Describing and Explaining Social Behavior

We can divide the tasks of a scientific social psychology into two general categories: *description* and *explanation*. If we want a scientific account of any phenomenon (bird migrations, earthquakes, or intertribal warfare), we first need an objective and reliable description. For example: How do people really act toward one another? How do they really feel about their friends, neighbors? What do they really believe about controversial topics? Many social behaviors, attitudes, and beliefs are hidden from the public eye, so there are some obstacles to overcome in painting an objective portrait of human social life.

Careful description is a first step, but it is not, in itself, enough to satisfy scientific curiosity. Social psychologists also seek to explain *why* people influence one another in the ways they do. A good scientific explanation can connect many thousands of unconnected observations into an interconnected, coherent, and meaningful pattern. The philosopher Jules Henri Poincaré compared scientific facts to the stones used to build a house, but he also observed that without a theory those facts are merely a pile of stones, rather than a well-formed house. Scientific explanations that connect and organize existing observations are called **theories**.

In addition to organizing what we already know, scientific theories give us hints about where to look next. What causes some people, like Malala Yousafzai, to be especially helpful, and others, like the man who shot her in the head, to be especially violent? Without a good theory, we would not know where to start searching for an answer. Maybe an inclination to help others is caused by the arrangement of the planets under which altruists are born or by something in the water they drank as children. Social psychological theories are more likely to suggest searching elsewhere for the causes of social behavior—in a person's family background, in the broader culture, or in general predispositions humans share with baboons and other social animals. And, as we'll see, social psychologists have developed some intriguing research methods designed to sort out those different sources of influence.

Finally, scientific theories can help us make predictions about future events and control previously unmanageable phenomena. Scientific theories have led to the electric light bulb, the iPhone, the space shuttle, and the control of diseases such as smallpox. As we will see, social psychological theories have provided useful information

Social psychology The scientific study of how people's thoughts, feelings, and behaviors are influenced by other people.

Theory Scientific explanation that connects and organizes existing observations and suggests fruitful paths for future research.

about the roots of prejudice, kindness, and love; about why people join rioting mobs or religious cults; and about a host of other puzzling phenomena.

1.1.2 Social Psychology Is an Interdisciplinary Bridge

Psychologists aren't the only ones pondering the mysteries of human social behavior. Anthropologists puzzle over why people in some societies have social customs that would seem radically inappropriate in others (in Chapter 8, we will talk about societies in which one woman marries multiple men, for example). Evolutionary biologists search for common patterns linking human social behavior with the behaviors of chimpanzees, hyenas, and indigo buntings (in Chapter 10, we will see that the hormone testosterone is similarly linked to aggression, and to sex roles, across a wide range of species). Political scientists and historians search for the determinants of warfare and intergroup conflicts, of the sort we will explore in Chapters 11 and 13. And economists search for the roots of people's decisions about whether to contribute to their group's welfare, or hoard their resources to themselves, topics we will investigate in Chapters 9 and 13.

How do the perspectives of all these disciplines fit together into a bigger picture? How does what you are learning in your biology class link with what you're learning in your anthropology class? How do the factoids of history connect with recent discoveries in neuroscience? What are the links between geography, economics, and marriage customs? It turns out all these things are profoundly connected, and in ways that affect not only the course of your personal life but also the course of world affairs. Evolutionary biology, neurochemistry, history, culture, and geography all have important implications for how people socially interact with one another, and those social interactions, in turn, affect which moral and religious sentiments are enforced as laws, how children are educated, and even how medical doctors treat their patients.

Because all of these influences converge to influence social behavior, social psychologists consider social behavior at many different levels of analysis. For example, one team of social psychologists examined societies around the world and found that cultural differences in friendliness and sociability are linked to geographic variations in disease prevalence—where there is more disease, people have traits that lead them to avoid contact with others (Murray et al., 2010; Schaller & Park, 2011). Other studies we'll discuss have examined how our relationships with other people can be affected by historical factors, hormone levels, phases of the menstrual cycle, brain activity, and local population density, and how all these influences can, in turn, affect our physical and mental health, as well as our economic behavior and political beliefs (e.g., Apicella et al., 2008; Cantú et al., 2014; Gelfand et al., 2011; Little et al., 2008; Sng et al., 2017; Uskul et al., 2008; Varnum et al., 2014). Thus, social psychology is in many ways the ultimate bridge discipline. Throughout this text, we will encounter many such interdisciplinary bridges, often considering findings that connect culture, evolutionary biology, and neuroscience with applied disciplines from business to law to medicine.

Major Theoretical Perspectives of Social Psychology

LO 1.2 Summarize the four major theoretical perspectives of social psychology, and discuss how they work together to explain human social behavior.

Social psychological theories have been influenced by intellectual developments ranging from the discovery of DNA to the emergence of artificial intelligence. Four major perspectives (or families of theories) have dominated the field: sociocultural, evolutionary, social learning, and social cognitive.

1.2.1 The Sociocultural Perspective

The year 1908 saw the publication of the first two major textbooks titled *Social Psychology*. One was written by sociologist Edward Alsworth Ross, who argued that the wellsprings of social behavior reside not in the individual but in the social group. He argued that people were carried along on "social currents," such as "the spread of a lynching spirit through a crowd . . . [or] an epidemic of religious emotion" (Ross, 1908, 1–2). Ross analyzed incidents such as the Dutch tulip bulb craze of 1634, in which people sold their houses and land to buy flower roots that cost more than their weight in gold, but that instantly became worthless when the craze stopped. To explain these crazes, Ross looked at the group as a whole rather than at the psyche of the individual group member. He viewed crazes and fads as products of "mob mind . . . that irrational unanimity of interest, feeling, opinion, or deed in a body of communicating individuals, which results from suggestion and imitation" (Ross, 1908, 65).

Like Ross, other sociologically based theorists emphasized larger social groupings, from neighborhood gangs to ethnic groups and political parties (e.g., Sumner, 1906). That emphasis continues in the modern **sociocultural perspective**—the view that a person's prejudices, preferences, and political persuasions are affected by factors that work at the level of the group, factors such as nationality, social class, and current historical trends (Cohen, 2015; Gelfand & Kashima, 2016; Heine, 2016). For example, compared to her working-class Irish grandmother, a modern-day Manhattan executive probably has different attitudes about premarital sex and women's roles in business (Roberts & Helson, 1997). Sociocultural theorists focus on the central importance of **social norms**, or rules about appropriate behavior, such as *Don't eat with your hands, Don't wear shorts to a wedding*, and so on. At the center of this perspective is the concept of **culture**, which we can broadly define as a set of beliefs, customs, habits, and languages shared by the people living in a particular time and place. People in Italy and France regard it as appropriate to kiss acquaintances on both cheeks when they meet in public, a custom that can make a visiting American feel awkward—they might be more comfortable with a high five. Of course, not everyone who lives in a particular country has exactly the same set of beliefs and customs. Americans from Alabama versus those living in New York, those who were raised in Hispanic Catholic families versus Eastern European Jewish families, and those who grow up in upper-middle-class versus working-class homes are exposed to somewhat different sets of cultural norms (Cohen, 2015; Cohen & Varnum, 2016; Kraus, Park, & Tan, 2017).

Culture includes all the human-engineered features of the environment, from subjective features, such as rules of etiquette, to objective features, such as houses and clothing (Fiske, 2002; Triandis, 1994). The technological features of our culture can have powerful effects on our social behaviors, as evidenced in recent years in the phenomena of iPhones and social networking Internet sites—technologies that profoundly influence how people communicate with one another (Crabb, 1996a, 1996b, 1999; Guadagno et al., 2008; McKenna & Bargh, 2000).

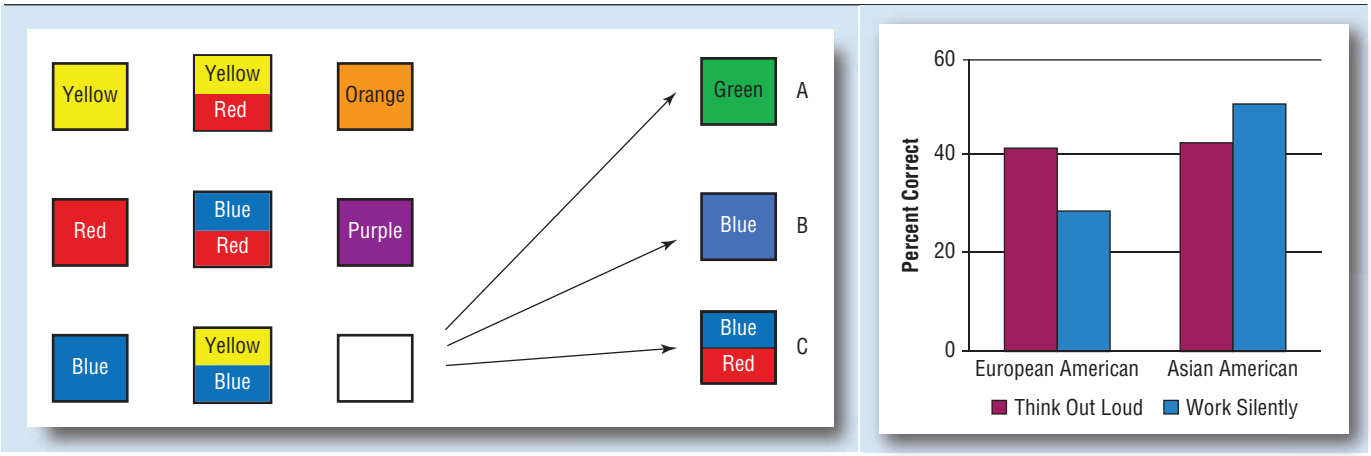
Each of us has been exposed to different cultural norms depending on our ethnicity, our socioeconomic status, the geographical region in which we were raised, and our religion (Cohen & Varnum, 2016; Johnson et al., 2011; Kraus et al., 2011; Sanchez-Burks, 2002). For example, Americans of European descent tend to place a high value on expressing themselves and making their own personal choices, and they like to "think out loud." In contrast, Americans of Asian descent tend to place relatively more emphasis on their families' choices, do not try to draw attention to themselves, and solve problems more effectively if they are permitted to think quietly on their own (Iyengar & Lepper, 1999; Kim, 2002; Kim & Sherman, 2007). In one study, Asian American and European American college students were encouraged to work on problems similar to the one in Figure 1.1 (you can try it yourself, what pattern should appear in the blank box, A, B, or C?). Sometimes the students were encouraged to work silently; at other times, they were asked to talk out loud and describe their thought processes. The European American students did better when they discussed their thought processes out loud, but the exact opposite happened for the Asian American students, who did better

Sociocultural perspective The theoretical viewpoint that searches for the causes of social behavior in influences from larger social groups.

Social norm A rule or expectation for appropriate social behavior.

Culture The beliefs, customs, habits, and languages shared by the people living in a particular time and place.

Figure 1.1 The Effects of Cultural Background on Thinking Processes



In one experiment, college students were given a series of 10 items from the Raven's Progressive Matrices test. For example, assuming that the set of 9 boxes on the top left is a logical series, which pattern on the top right (A, B, or C) should appear in the blank box? Results depicted in the graph on the right show that European Americans did better when they were encouraged to talk aloud about their thinking processes. In contrast, Asian Americans did better when permitted to work in silence.

when they worked in silence. As the study's author pointed out, American schools often encourage students to think out loud, on the assumption that discussing their thoughts with another person will help the students better solve problems. This educational tactic works for European Americans but can backfire with Asian American students.

Consider the case of Malala Yousafzai, the 14-year-old girl who was shot in the head for advocating education for women. A psychologist adopting a sociocultural perspective might observe the very different norms governing appropriate female behavior in Pakistan versus Norway and Sweden, for example. In the region of Pakistan where Malala was raised, women were expected not to leave their homes unless their faces were covered and they were accompanied by a male relative. Malala describes one teenage girl who was raped and became pregnant and was then imprisoned for adultery because she could not provide four men who would testify that she was not an adulteress (Yousafzai & Lamb, 2013). When the World Economic Forum recently ranked 144 countries for their degree of gender equality, Pakistan was the second lowest in the world (only Yemen has more inequality between the sexes). Of the top five most sexually egalitarian countries in the world, on the other hand, four were Scandinavian countries (Iceland, Norway, Finland, and Sweden). In Sweden, gender discrimination in the workplace was made illegal 50 years ago, both fathers and mothers are given parental leave to care for children, and almost half of the elected representatives in government are women.

Sociocultural theorists also point out that the norms of different societies change over time. Even in Scandinavian countries during the 1800s, sex roles were more rigid, fundamentalist religious values were more widespread, and women did not have the right to vote. Pakistan, on the other hand, has gone in the other direction in recent decades, as fundamentalist religious leaders have encouraged brutal measures such as the bombing of girls' schools and the beating of women in public, which has in turn discouraged moderate Pakistanis who had previously adopted European attitudes and customs. These cultural changes are not random, and social psychologists have begun to study the factors that lead societies to change in particular ways in response to particular environmental factors such as disease prevalence, population density, and warfare (Sng et al., 2018). For example, there appears to be a link between infectious disease and gender inequality. Societies with more disease have more unequal

relations between men and women, and over time, as rates of infectious disease have changed within a society, changes in gender equality have followed suit (Varnum & Grossman, 2016).

As you will see, the study of groups, cultures, and social norms continues as a major thrust in social psychology (e.g., Adams, 2005; Chen, 2008; Matsumoto et al., 2008; Ross et al., 2005; Shiota et al., 2010; Sng et al, 2018). We will consider these sociocultural influences in every chapter of this text.

INVESTIGATION

Consider two people you know whose cultural backgrounds differ from yours (another country, a different social class, ethnicity, or religion). In what ways do the norms of your different cultures lead you to behave differently in your interactions with each other?

1.2.2 The Evolutionary Perspective

The year 1908 saw the publication of another text called *Social Psychology*. This one was written by William McDougall, a British psychologist originally trained in biology. McDougall left Oxford to take the William James chair in psychology at Harvard. McDougall (1908) adopted an **evolutionary perspective**—the view that human social behaviors are rooted in physical and psychological predispositions that helped our ancestors survive and reproduce. McDougall followed Charles Darwin's (1873) suggestion that human social behaviors (such as smiling, sneering, and other emotional expressions) had evolved along with physical features (such as upright posture and grasping thumbs).

Evolutionary perspective A theoretical viewpoint that searches for the causes of social behavior in the physical and psychological predispositions that helped our ancestors survive and reproduce.

The central driving force of evolution is **natural selection**, the process whereby animals with characteristics that help them survive and reproduce pass on those traits to their offspring. New characteristics that are well suited to particular environments—called **adaptations**—will come to replace characteristics that are less well suited to environmental demands and opportunities. Dolphins are mammals closely related to cows, but their legs evolved into fins because that shape is better suited to life under water. Darwin assumed that just as an animal's body is shaped by natural selection, so is that animal's brain.

Natural selection The process by which characteristics that help animals survive and reproduce are passed on to their offspring.

Adaptation A characteristic that is well designed to help an animal survive and reproduce in a particular environment.

(left) David Keith Jones/Images of Africa Photobank/Alamy Stock Photo; (center) V.S.Anandhakrishna/Shutterstock; (right) Alexander Savchenko/123RF

Expressions of happiness across human cultures. In the first book on evolutionary psychology, Charles Darwin argued that some emotional expressions might be universal patterns of communication inherited from our ancestors.

Psychologists once assumed that evolution could only produce inflexible "instincts" that were "wired in" at birth and not much influenced by the environment. Scientists now understand that biological influences on behavior are usually flexible and responsive to the environment (e.g., Gangestad et al., 2006; Kenrick & Gomez-Jacinto, 2014; O'Gorman et al., 2008; Robinson et al., 2008). Consider fear, for example. Fear would have helped our ancestors respond rapidly to threats such as poisonous insects, snakes, and other people who might pose a danger to them (Ohman et al., 2001). Because it would exhaust our bodies to be on continuous high alert, though, the so-called fight-or-flight response (which makes us want to run or defend ourselves in frightening situations) is exquisitely sensitive to cues that suggest when we are and are not likely to be in danger (Cannon, 1929).

Several teams of researchers have applied an evolutionary perspective to help understand the potentially volatile prejudices between people who belong to different groups (e.g., Kurzban & Leary, 2001; Makhanova et al., 2015; Navarrete et al., 2009; Sidanius & Pratto, 1999). For example, one team of researchers asked White and Asian Canadian college students to rate their reactions to photographs of Black men (Schaller, Park, & Mueller, 2003). Some of the students did the ratings in a brightly lit room; others were in a completely dark room. In the dark room, men with a chronic tendency to view the world as a dangerous place were particularly prone to see the Black men as threatening. In the ancestral past, it would have been useful for our ancestors to be especially fearful of strangers under certain circumstances. The possibility of dangerous conflict between two different groups of men who encountered one another after dark would have led to wariness on the part of men who found themselves in this type of situation. The researchers note that in modern multicultural societies the tendency to respond with these primitive self-protective reactions can lead to adverse consequences, including bullying, gang warfare, and intergroup conflict.

David Lundberg-Kenrick

Paternal investment. Unlike males in 95% of other mammalian species, human fathers invest a great deal of time, energy, and resources in their offspring.

On the one hand, as we noted earlier, sociocultural theorists have been intrigued by *differences* in behavior from one culture to another. On the other hand, evolutionary theorists are interested in general characteristics of our species, so they have searched for *common patterns* in human social behaviors around the world (e.g., Dunn et al., 2010; Kenrick & Keefe, 1992; Matsumoto & Willingham, 2006; Schmitt, 2006b). Men and women in every human society, for example, establish long-term marriage bonds in which the man helps the woman raise a family (Geary, 2000; Hrdy, 1999). This might seem unsurprising until one looks at most of our furry relatives. Mothers in 95 to 97% of other mammalian species go it alone without any help from the male. Why are family values so rare among mammalian males? After fertilization, fathers just aren't all that necessary if you are a cow or an antelope. Paternal care becomes useful, though, in species like coyotes and human beings, whose young are born helpless (Finkel & Eastwick, 2015; Fletcher et al., 2015; Geary, 2005).

Besides the broad commonalities of human nature, evolutionary psychologists are also interested in differences between individuals (e.g., Boothroyd et al., 2008; Feinberg et al., 2008; Jackson & Kirkpatrick, 2008; Jonason, Li, & Buss, 2010). Within any species there are often multiple strategies for survival and reproduction. For example, some male sunfish grow large, defend territories, and build nests, which attract females. Other males are smaller and impersonate females, darting in to fertilize the eggs just as the female mates with a large territorial male (Gould & Gould, 1989). Although people in all societies form some type of long-term parental bond, they also vary considerably in their mating strategies: Some men and women are monogamous, whereas others join in marriages that involve more than one husband, as in Tibet, or more than one wife, as in Afghanistan (Schmitt, 2005a). As we shall see in later chapters, social psychologists are just beginning to explore how biological predispositions and culture interact to shape complex social behaviors, from violence and prejudice to altruism, love, and religiosity (e.g., Elfenbein & Ambady, 2002; Moon, Krems, & Cohen, 2018; Williams, Sng, & Neuberg, 2016).

1.2.3 The Social Learning Perspective

During the decades following 1908, Ross's group-centered perspective and McDougall's evolutionary approach declined in popularity. Instead, many psychologists adopted a **social learning perspective**, which viewed social behavior as driven by each individual's past learning experiences with reward and punishment (e.g., Allport, 1924; Hull, 1934).

Social learning perspective A theoretical viewpoint that focuses on past learning experiences as determinants of a person's social behaviors.

On this view, whether we love or hate another person or group of people, whether we are gregarious or reserved, and whether we desire to be a leader or a follower, are all determined by the rewards and punishments we receive from our parents, our teachers, and our peers. We don't need to learn everything from our own trials and errors, though; we can observe what happens to the other people around us and the people we read about in books and magazines or hear about on television. In a classic series of experiments, Albert Bandura and his colleagues showed how children learn to imitate aggressive behavior after seeing another child or adult rewarded for beating an inflatable Bobo doll (e.g., Bandura, Ross, & Ross, 1961). Bandura expressed concern because his own research had suggested that movies and television often teach young people that violent behavior can be heroic and rewarding. These concerns have been validated by numerous examples of life imitating art. For example, on April 8, 2000, the *Arizona Republic* reported the story of a group of boys in a local high school who started a "fight club" modeled after one started by Brad Pitt's character in a 1999 movie of the same name. As modeled by the characters in the movie, the teenage boys would gather together to punch one another in the face (Davis, 2000). In a related vein, as we will discuss in Chapter 10, there is evidence that violent video games, which often give players additional points every time they kill or maim a lifelike opponent, may desensitize young boys to violence and teach them to associate hurting others with rewards (Anderson et al., 2017; Bartholow et al., 2006; Engehardt et al., 2011).

What led Malala Yousafzai to take such a courageous stand in favor of girls' education in Pakistan? A social learning theorist might search for evidence that she had received direct rewards from her parents, teachers, and peers for doing well in school and for speaking out against the Taliban's policies to restrict women's rights. She regularly came in at the top of her class, and in 2017 was accepted as a student at Oxford, one of the most prestigious universities in the world. A related possibility involves indirect social learning. All her life, Malala had been exposed to role models who championed education. In fact, Malala's father was the director of the school she attended. And he had himself spoken out publicly against the Taliban's restrictions on girls' education (to the point where his own life was threatened on numerous occasions).

Dave Allocca/StarPix/Shutterstock

Social learning. According to social learning theory, whether a person ends up as a successful athlete, a criminal, or a doctor depends on modeling experiences and rewards from parents and others in the child's environment. As described, Malala Yousafzai's father was a role model for defending education and defying the Taliban.

The social learning perspective is similar to the sociocultural perspective in that it searches for the causes of social behavior in a person's environment. The two perspectives are slightly different in their breadth of focus over time and place, however. Social learning theorists emphasize the individual's unique experiences in a particular family, school, or peer group. How did Malala's experiences growing up with an educator for a father shape her behaviors, for example? Sociocultural theorists are not as concerned with specific individuals or their unique experiences but instead look at larger social aggregates, such as Asian Canadians, Hispanic Americans, college students in sororities, Protestants, or members of the upper class (e.g., Cohen, Malka, et al., 2009; Hoshino-Browne et al., 2005; Vandello & Cohen, 2003). How do the general beliefs of fundamentalist Muslims and the history and economy of Pakistan influence the social norms there, for example? Another difference is that sociocultural theorists lean toward the assumption that norms, like clothing styles, can change relatively quickly, whereas social learning theorists have generally assumed that habits learned early in

life may be difficult to break. A sociocultural theorist might point out, for example, that Pakistan and Afghanistan underwent radical changes in just a few years after those countries separated from England and Russia.

INVESTIGATION

Think of someone whose behavior has been prominent in the news of late. How might this person's actions be explained differently from the sociocultural, evolutionary, and social learning perspectives?

1.2.4 The Social Cognitive Perspective

Despite their differences, the sociocultural, evolutionary, and social learning perspectives all emphasize the objective environment. Each assumes that our social behaviors are influenced by real events in the world. During the 1930s and 1940s Kurt Lewin brought a different perspective to social psychology, arguing that social behavior is driven by each person's subjective interpretations of events in the social world (Lewin et al., 1939). For example, whether you decide to work toward the goal of becoming class president would depend on (1) your subjective guess about your chances of winning the office and (2) your subjective evaluation of the benefits of being class president (Higgins, 1997, 2012). If you don't *think* it would be personally rewarding to be class president, or if you want to be president but don't *expect* to win, you won't bother to run for election—regardless of whether it would objectively be a winnable or enjoyable post for you.

By emphasizing subjective interpretations, Lewin did not mean to imply that no objective reality existed. Instead, he emphasized the interaction between the actual events in your life and your interpretations of those events. Lewin believed that a person's interpretation of any situation was also related to his or her goals at the time. In one study, men viewed photographs of women who were wearing neutral expressions on their faces. The experimental task was to judge whether the women were trying to hide any emotions. If the men had first watched a movie that put them in a romantic frame of mind, the men were more likely to see signs of sexual arousal on the women's faces, but only if the women were physically attractive (Maner et al., 2005). Thus, facial expressions that were objectively the same were seen very differently, depending on the men's motivational states.

The emphasis on an interaction between inner experience and the outside world led naturally to a close association between social psychology and cognitive psychology (Kihlstrom, 2013; Ross, Lepper, & Ward, 2010). Cognitive psychologists study the mental processes involved in noticing, interpreting, judging, and remembering events in the environment. During the 1950s the advent of computers helped lead a "cognitive revolution"—a rebirth of interest in the workings of the mind. During the 1970s and 1980s an increasing number of social psychologists adopted a **social cognitive perspective**, which focuses on the processes involved in people's choice of which social events to pay attention to, which interpretations to make of these events, and how to store these experiences in memory (e.g., Andersen & Chen, 2002; Carlston, 2013; Plant et al., 2004; Roese & Summerville, 2005).

Social psychologists have conducted a number of fascinating experiments to explore how your reactions to any social situation can be influenced by cognitive factors, such as what you are paying attention to, and what pops into your memory in a given situation (e.g., Donders et al., 2008; Sharif & Norenzayan, 2007; Trawalter et al., 2008). In one such experiment, high school students were asked how important they thought it was to make a lot of money in their future jobs (Roney, 2003). Some of the students answered the question in a room with members of the opposite sex; some were around only members of their own sex. As you can see in Figure 1.2, the presence of boys made no difference in the way that high school girls answered the

Social cognitive perspective A theoretical viewpoint that focuses on the mental processes involved in paying attention to, interpreting, and remembering social experiences.

Figure 1.2 Social Context and Decision Making

When high school students were asked to rate "How important is having lots of money to your life?" boys' answers were different if they answered the question around high school girls.

question. But being around girls led high school boys to inflate the value they placed on wealth. The researcher also found that seeing ads with young, attractive female models (as opposed to ads depicting older people) stimulated college men to rate themselves as more ambitious and to place more value on being financially successful. James Roney, the author of the study, explained the results in terms of a simple cognitive mechanism—seeing attractive young women activates thoughts about dating in young men. This, in turn, triggers associated thoughts about "what women want," including the tendency for women to place more emphasis on financial success in a mate (e.g., Li et al., 2002; Li, Yong, et al., 2013).

One problem we face in processing social information is that there is so much of it. It's virtually impossible to remember every single person you passed as you walked across campus this morning, much less all the social interactions you had over the last week or the last year. Because we can't focus on everything we see and hear, social information processing is selective. As we'll see in later chapters, sometimes we put our minds on automatic, focusing on a superficial detail or two that will help us come to a quick decision about what to do next (such as when you're in a rush and have to decide whether to give 50 cents to a homeless woman with her hand out). At other times, we pay careful attention to particular details and search, like scientists, for particular types of social information that will allow us to make accurate decisions (when you're thinking of dating someone, for example) (Gawronski & Creighton, 2013; Strack et al., 2006).

Social psychologists have found that people have a very hard time keeping a completely fair and open mind to new social information, even when we're trying to do so (e.g., Lord, Lepper, & Preston, 1979, 1984; Washburn & Skitka, 2017). Rather than operating like scientists seeking the truth, we often process social information more like lawyers defending a client (Haidt, 2001; Hornsey & Fielding, 2017). Consider this question: What are you like now, and how are you different now from what you were like when you were 16 years old? When one team of researchers asked Canadian college students this question, the students had lots of positive things to say about their present selves and more negative things to say about their former selves. Of course, it might be that people simply become better human beings as they age. When the researchers, however, asked another group of students to rate acquaintances of the same age, the students did not perceive their acquaintances as growing into better and better people (Wilson & Ross, 2001). The tendency to view ourselves (but not others) as having changed "from chumps to champs" fits with a number of other findings suggesting that people tend to process social information in a way that flatters themselves (Greenwald, Banaji, et al., 2002; Kurzban, 2012).

In Chapter 3, we will go into detail on the many findings that have been inspired by the social cognitive perspective. Because of the central importance of this perspective in modern social psychology, it will provide an essential component throughout this text as we discuss the many mysteries of social behavior.

INVESTIGATION

Think of the different people you've passed on the street or on campus or had interactions with anywhere else today. In what ways might the cognitive processes we have discussed in this section affect which people come to mind more easily?

Table 1.1 Major Theoretical Perspectives in Social Psychology

Perspective	What Drives Social Behavior?	Example
Sociocultural	Forces in larger social groups	Employees working at IBM in the 1960s wore blue dress shirts (as opposed to white); employees working for Apple in 2018 are more likely to wear colorful T-shirts and jeans to work.
Evolutionary	Inherited tendencies to respond to the social environment in ways that would have helped our ancestors survive and reproduce	Human infants the world over are born with a set of behavioral mechanisms (sucking, crying, cooing) that induce hormonal changes in their mothers, increasing the likelihood they will be nursed and cared for.
Social learning	Rewards and punishments; observing how other people are rewarded and punished for their social behaviors	An African American girl decides to become a writer after watching an inspiring TED talk by author Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie.
Social cognitive	What we pay attention to in a social situation, how we interpret it, and how we connect the current situation to related experiences in memory	If you pass a homeless person on the street, you may be more likely to help if you interpret his plight as something beyond his control and if he reminds you of the parable of the Good Samaritan.

1.2.5 Combining Perspectives

Table 1.1 summarizes the four major theoretical perspectives in social psychology. Although these perspectives are sometimes viewed as competing, each actually focuses on different parts of the mysteries of social life.

Because a single traditional perspective focuses on only part of the picture, we need to combine and integrate the different approaches to see the full picture. The processes of attention and memory studied by cognitive researchers are shaped by people's learning histories and cultures, which are, in turn, the products of an evolutionary past in which humans have created, and have been created by, their social groups (Kenrick, Nieuweboer, & Buunk, 2010; Klein et al., 2002; Sng, Neuberg, Varnum, Kenrick, et al., 2018). Consider the topic of prejudice—to some extent, prejudices against members of other groups are related to evolved aversions to strangers, who were often sources of physical danger and new diseases for our ancestors (e.g., McDonald et al., 2012; Schaller, Park, & Mueller, 2003). However, aversions to outsiders always involved trade-offs because members of different groups engaged in trade and exchanged mates with one another (Faulkner et al., 2004; Navarette et al., 2007). Hence, human beings have always had to learn who were their friends and who were their enemies, and which members of different outgroups to fear and which to trust (e.g., Phelps et al., 2000). As relationships between different groups change with historical events, the cultural norms also change accordingly. For example, in the 1950s many African Americans were still being denied the right to vote; 50 years later, things changed so much that an African American could become president of the United States. To fully understand the mysteries of social life, then, it is necessary to piece together clues from several different perspectives.

Basic Principles of Social Behavior

LO 1.3 Describe the five fundamental motives behind goal-oriented social behavior, and explain what is meant by the person, the situation, and person–situation interactions.

Despite their differences, all the major perspectives in social psychology share a pair of key assumptions. First, people interact with one another to achieve some goal or satisfy some inner motivation. Cognitive psychologists emphasize conscious goals triggered by the

current situation, as when an ad saying "Father's Day is just around the corner!" reminds you to rush out and buy your father another one of those Hawaiian print ties he appreciated so much last year. Learning theorists emphasize how past rewards encourage us to approach some goals and avoid others. For example, if your parents smile proudly every time you share your toys with your sister but grimace every time you talk about money, you may set the goal of joining the Peace Corps instead of a Wall Street brokerage firm. Evolutionary theorists emphasize social motivations rooted in our ancestral past: People who were motivated to get along with other members of their social groups, for instance, were more likely to survive and pass on their genes than were self-centered hermits.

A second common theoretical thread is a focus on the interaction between the person and the situation. All the major perspectives assume that motivations inside each of us interact with events in the outside situations we encounter. For example, the evolutionary perspective emphasizes how internal reactions such as anger, fear, or sexual arousal are triggered by situations related to survival or reproduction (hungry-looking predators or flirtatious glances, for example). Social learning theorists study how learned responses within the individual are linked to rewards and punishments in the social setting. And cognitive theorists examine how a person's thought processes are linked with moment-to-moment changes in the social situation. Throughout this book, then, we will emphasize two broad principles shared by the different perspectives.

1. Social behavior is *goal oriented*. People interact with one another to achieve some goal or satisfy some inner motivation.
2. Social behavior represents a continual *interaction* between the person and the situation.

In the following sections, we take a closer look at these two principles.

1.3.1 Social Behavior Is Goal Oriented

Goals affect our social behaviors on several levels. At the surface level, any one of us can easily come up with a long list of day-to-day goals: to find out the latest office gossip, to make a good impression on a teacher, or to get a date for next Saturday night. At a somewhat broader level, we can talk about longer term goals: to gain a reputation as someone who gets things done, to be seen as likable, or to find true love. Those broader goals often tie together several other day-to-day goals: Developing a romantic relationship incorporates shorter term goals such as getting a date for Saturday night and being comforted by your partner after an exam.

At the broadest level, we can ask about fundamental motives—the ultimate functions of our social behavior (Neel et al., 2016; Kenrick et al., 2010). So, for example, succeeding in your career and making connections with people in high places could both be incorporated into a fundamental motive of "gaining and maintaining status." To better understand these fundamental motives, let's consider several that have been investigated by social psychologists.

TO ESTABLISH SOCIAL TIES When Malala was growing up, her family would often open their home up to others. She shared her room with a cousin from a rural village that had no school and with another girl whose father had died and left her destitute. Malala's father, Ziauddin Yousafzai, had been poor, and had been able to go to college only because another family had allowed him to live with them. In the case of almost every goal you ever reach, you get there more easily when there are others helping you along. Some goals, such as Malala's father's dream of building a school (which he could not have done without the support of his friends and neighbors), would not happen at all if not for teamwork.

When psychologists enumerate the most basic motives underlying human behavior, the desire to establish ties with other people is usually high on the list (e.g., Bugental, 2000; McAdams, 1990). People are exquisitely sensitive to rejection and go to great lengths to reconnect with others if they feel excluded (Anthony et al., 2007; Maner, DeWall, et al., 2007; Williams & Nida, 2011). One team of researchers observed

brain-wave patterns in people as they played a virtual ball-tossing game with two other players. When the two other players threw the ball to one another and excluded the participant, the person who was ostracized showed a pattern of activity in two different areas of the cortex usually associated with physical injury (Eisenberger et al., 2003). Other research suggests that the agony of social separation can be reduced by opiates, drugs normally used to quell the agony of a bleeding wound (Panksepp, 2005). Why does social isolation tap into the same neural mechanisms as physical pain? Perhaps because, without their friends, our ancestors would not have survived (Hill & Hurtado, 1996; MacDonald & Leary, 2005). Hence social rejection may trigger a primitive physiological emergency reaction.

TO UNDERSTAND OURSELVES AND OTHERS People gossip, they read profiles of criminal personalities in the newspaper, and they seek feedback from their friends about their chances of getting a date with a charming new classmate. The importance of such information is obvious—by understanding yourself and your relationships with others you are able to manage your life more effectively. Someone who is "out of touch" with these realities will have a harder time surviving in a social group (Leary & Baumeister, 2000; Sedikides & Skowronski, 2000). Because social knowledge is so fundamental to all human relationships, social psychologists have devoted a great deal of attention to the topic of social cognition (which, as noted earlier, refers to the mental processes involved in attending to, interpreting, and remembering other people). In Chapter 3, we explore this topic in depth, and we return to it throughout the chapters that follow.

Jeremy Sutton-Hibbert/Alamy Stock Photo

Losers to heroes. A common theme in children's literature is a hero who starts out in desperate circumstances (such as the orphaned Harry Potter living under the stairs in a grumpy aunt's house) and then rises in status (becoming in Harry's case, the most powerful wizard on earth). J.K. Rowling herself went from a poverty-stricken single mother to one of the world's richest people and a great philanthropist.

TO GAIN AND MAINTAIN STATUS J.K. Rowling's *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone* and its sequels have sold over 500 million copies, and 7 of the top 20 best-selling novels of all time are Harry Potter books. When the story of Harry Potter begins, he is a lowly orphan, an object of scorn and abuse living in a closet under the stairs in his aunt's house. By the final book's end, Harry has overcome seemingly insurmountable obstacles to defeat the forces of evil and become the world's most powerful and respected wizard. This theme, of rising from desperation to grand success, is enormously popular in literature and movies (think of Luke Skywalker from *Star Wars*; Percy Jackson from the *Lightning Thief*; and Jake Sully, the paraplegic who turned into a flying blue superhero in *Avatar*). Likewise in real life, winning and losing are matters of profound importance, to gradeschoolers competing for places on Little League all-star teams, college students fighting for grades, middle managers striving for executive positions, and senators and governors campaigning to win the presidency. And humans aren't alone in struggling for status. Baboons are social primates who, like us, pay close attention to where they stand in the social hierarchy. An intensive study of baboons' physiological responses to social events revealed that a loss of status led to a particularly disruptive set of hormonal alarm responses (Sapolsky, 2001).

The advantages of attaining status include not only immediate material payoffs, such as access to food, but also the less tangible social benefits that follow from other people's (or other baboons') respect and admiration (Henrich & Gil-White, 2001; Maner & Mead, 2010). So it makes sense that most of us go to great lengths not only to present ourselves in a positive light to others, but also to convince ourselves that we have reason to hold our heads up high (e.g., Sedikides et al., 2003; Tesser, 2000). Throughout this book, we will see that the motivation to gain and maintain status underlies a wide range of social behaviors.

TO DEFEND OURSELVES AND THOSE WE VALUE At the local level, people build fences around their houses, put up Keep Out signs on their streets, join gangs, and buy attack dogs to protect themselves. At the national level, countries build armies to protect themselves against the armies of other countries. People are extremely motivated to defend themselves when their reputations, their resources, or their families are threatened. People can recognize an angry expression in just a fraction of a second and do so significantly faster if the angry expression is on a man's face (Becker et al., 2007). Why? Men, such as the fanatic who shot Malala, generally pose more of a physical threat

than do women, and this threat is particularly pronounced if those men are strangers or members of outgroups (Ackerman, Shapiro, et al., 2006; McDonald, Navarrete, & Van Vugt, 2012; Neel et al., 2012).The motivation to defend ourselves can have obvious benefits, promoting our survival and that of our family members, but it can also lead to escalating violence and racism (Duntley, 2005; Schaller, Park, Mueller, et al., 2003). We will discuss the sometimes frightening power of self-protective motivation in the chapters that deal with aggression, prejudice, and intergroup conflict.

TO ATTRACT AND RETAIN MATES Rajinder Singh, sixth maharajah of the state of Patiala in India, took 350 spouses; most North Americans will take at least one. People often go to great lengths to find and keep these partners, writing lengthy love letters, having long phone calls at 2 A.M., or joining dating apps. An initial flirtation with a pleasant acquaintance in your psychology class could lead to feelings of attraction, romantic love, and even a lifelong family bond. From an evolutionary perspective, these are all connected (Kenrick, Maner, & Li, 2016). Indeed, evolutionary theorists believe that the goal of reproduction underlies all the other social goals. From this perspective, we affiliate, we seek social information, we strive for status, and we act in aggressive and self-protective ways all toward the ultimate end of reproducing our genes (Buss, 2015; Hill et al., 2012; Neuberg et al., 2010).

INVESTIGATION

Recall one pleasant and one unpleasant interaction you've had with another person or group. How do those interactions link with the different goals we just discussed?

1.3.2 The Interaction between the Person and the Situation

If an attractive stranger on your left begins to flirt with you, you may stop trying to impress your boss, who is standing on your right. If you later notice that a third person—a large male dressed in a motorcycle jacket—has started to sneer at you and to stand possessively close to the flirtatious stranger, you may shift to thoughts of self-protection. In contrast, a coworker who is a more devoted social climber may be so desperately trying to impress the boss as to be oblivious to flirtation opportunities or physical dangers.

In other words, the fundamental motives and specific goals active at any one time reflect the continual interaction between factors inside the person and factors outside in the world. Because we will examine these interactions in some detail throughout this book, let us briefly consider what we mean by "the person" and "the situation" and how the two become interwoven through "person–situation interactions."

PERSON **THE PERSON** When we talk about the **person**, we will typically be referring to features or characteristics that individuals carry into social situations. If asked to describe yourself, you might mention physical characteristics (your height or your sex, for example), chronic attitudes or preferences (your tendency to vote Republican, Democrat, or Libertarian, for example), and psychological traits (whether you are extraverted or introverted, emotional or calm, and so on). These characteristics may be based on genetic or physiological factors that make you different from others, or they may be based on past learning experiences and maintained by particular ways you have of thinking about yourself or the other people you encounter on a day-to-day basis. Other aspects of the person may be more temporary, such as your current mood or sense of self-worth. Throughout the text, when we want to focus specifically on a feature of the person, we will signify this by adding the word PERSON before the header.

Person Features or characteristics that individuals carry into social situations.

SITUATION **THE SITUATION** When we talk about the social **situation**, we are referring to events or circumstances outside the person. These can range from fleeting events in the immediate social context (as when a stranger winks at you) to long-lasting influences, such as growing up on an isolated rural farm in Iowa or in a multiethnic neighborhood in New York City. When we want to focus specifically on a feature of the situation, we will signify this by adding the word SITUATION before the header.

INTERACTION **PERSON–SITUATION INTERACTIONS** Neither the person nor the situation is a fixed entity. As William James observed, "Many a youth who is demure enough before his parents and teachers, swears and swaggers like a pirate among his 'tough' young friends" (1890, p. 294). Different social situations trigger different goals—sometimes we want to be liked, sometimes we want to be feared, and so on (Dunning, 2015; Griskevicius, Tybur, et al., 2009). Because there is often quite a bit going on in a single situation, your goal at any given moment may depend on what you are paying attention to. And depending on your current goals and your lifelong traits, you may respond differently to a situation from the way others do (e.g., Graziano et al., 2007). Think of a party where some people are dancing, some are having a philosophical discussion, and still others are sharing raunchy jokes.

As we discuss in detail in Chapter 2, people and situations interact in several different ways. For example, we tend to interpret ambiguous situations in ways that fit with our personal motives (Dunning & Balcetis, 2013; Huang & Bargh, 2014; Krems et al., 2015). Whether you think someone was flirting with you or just being friendly depends on your sex and whether you are in a romantic frame of mind (Maner et al., 2005). Our personalities also affect which situations we choose to enter (Roberts et al., 2003; Snyder & Ickes, 1985). If you are an introvert, you might decline an invitation to a party; an extravert might crash the party, even if he wasn't invited.

Just as people choose their situations, so social situations may choose certain types of people to enter them. The high school freshman who is taller than average may be recruited for basketball training, for example, whereas a friend who is better than average at math and science may be recruited for honors classes. And small initial differences between people may get magnified by situations (such as basketball training sessions and honors classes). Thus situation and person shape and choose one another in a continuing cycle.

When we want to focus specifically on a person–situation interaction, we will signify this by adding the word INTERACTION before the header.

How Psychologists Study Social Behavior

LO 1.4 List the strengths and weaknesses of each of the different descriptive methods (e.g., naturalistic observation, case study) and experimental methods, and explain why researchers find value in combining different methods.

Scientific research is a bit like detective work. A detective begins with a mystery and a set of procedures for solving that mystery: interview witnesses, look for a motive, try to rule out various suspects, examine the material evidence, and so on. There are pitfalls at every step: Witnesses may lie or base their testimony on unfounded assumptions, some motives may be hidden, and the evidence may have been tampered with. Like detectives, social psychologists begin with mysteries. We opened this chapter with several: What are the roots of violence? Why do some people make better leaders? How can we get along with our romantic partners? Social psychologists have a set of procedures for solving such mysteries and, like detectives, they must also be aware of potential pitfalls involved in using these procedures.

Situation Environmental events or circumstances outside the person.

Psychologists begin their detective work with **hypotheses**—educated guesses about how the evidence is likely to turn out. If you wanted to search for evidence about some interesting social behavior, you might start with one of the theoretical perspectives we discussed earlier. For example, adopting a social learning perspective on Malala's social activism and support for education, you might note that her father had himself been an outspoken advocate for women's education in Pakistan. An alternative hypothesis is that people inherit genetic tendencies toward altruism from their parents.

Not all social psychological hypotheses are logically derived from a scientific theory. You might draw an interesting hypothesis from an odd event that seems to contradict common sense, such as when a person becomes more committed to a religious cult after the leader's predictions about the end of the world do not come true (Festinger et al., 1956). Or you might search for exceptions to some established psychological principle, such as when a reward causes a child to stop working on a task (e.g., Deci et al., 1999; Lepper et al., 1973). Social psychologist William McGuire (1997) enumerated 49 different ways to go about generating a research hypothesis.

Many people stop looking once they come up with a plausible-sounding explanation for why another person appeared generous, zealous, aggressive, or loving. But concocting a plausible-seeming hypothesis is only the beginning of a scientific search. Sometimes even the most plausible hypotheses prove to be dead wrong. For example, raising students' self-esteem has been touted by educators and politicians as a cure for everything from premarital sex to assault, rape, and murder (see Baumeister, Smart, & Boden, 1996). On the surface, it seems quite reasonable that people who feel bad about themselves might be more likely to act out in a sexual or violent way, perhaps to boost their fragile self-esteem. But when psychologists look at the actual research evidence, it appears that the hypotheses about the dangers of low self-esteem, however logical they sound, are often wrong. After reviewing the research evidence on self-esteem, social psychologists Roy Baumeister, Brad Bushman, and Keith Campbell (2000) concluded that we have little to fear from people with low self-esteem and more to fear from those who have an inflated view of themselves. These contrary findings make sense if we think of low self-esteem as humility and high self-esteem as conceit and arrogance.

The detective tools psychologists use to gather data about their hypotheses can be roughly divided into two categories: descriptive and experimental. **Descriptive methods** are used to measure or record behaviors, thoughts, or feelings in their natural state. When psychologists use descriptive methods, they hope to record behaviors without changing them in any way. **Experimental methods**, in contrast, are used to uncover the causes of behavior by systematically varying some aspect of the situation.

1.4.1 Descriptive Methods

Before we can understand the causes of any phenomenon, it helps to have a careful description of what it is we're talking about. Social psychologists use five major types of descriptive methods: naturalistic observation, case studies, archives, surveys, and psychological tests.

Hypothesis A researcher's prediction about what he or she will find.

Descriptive method Procedure for measuring or recording behaviors, thoughts, and feelings in their natural state (including naturalistic observations, case studies, archival studies, surveys, and psychological tests).

Experimental method Procedure for uncovering causal processes by systematically manipulating some aspect of a situation.

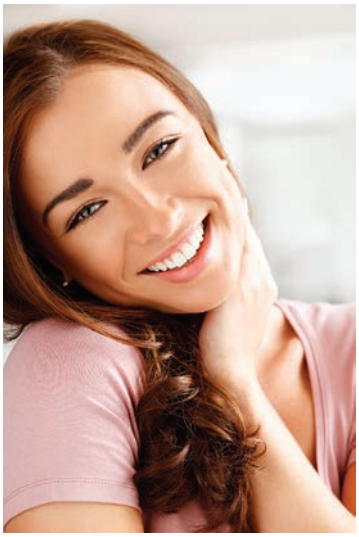
Naturalistic observation Recording everyday behaviors as they unfold in their natural settings.

NATURALISTIC OBSERVATION Perhaps the most straightforward descriptive method is **naturalistic observation**. It involves, quite simply, observing behavior as it unfolds in its natural setting. As one example, psychologist Monica Moore (1985) went to a setting where she expected women to naturally show a lot of nonverbal flirtation behaviors—a singles bar. Sitting out of view, she counted various gestures displayed by women toward men and compared these to behaviors displayed in a library or women's center meeting. Women flirting with men in the singles bar gestured in certain ways that were very uncommon in the other settings. For instance, a woman in the bar would frequently glance at a man for a few seconds, smile, flip her hair, and tilt her head at a 45-degree angle so her neck was exposed.

Naturalistic observation has a number of advantages as a research method. Behavior in a natural setting is spontaneous rather than artificial and contrived. In contrast, imagine the difficulties of asking students to demonstrate flirtation gestures in a laboratory. For one thing, people might not be consciously aware of the bodily movements and gestures they make when they are actually flirting. For another, people might feel too uncomfortable to flirt when they know researchers with notepads are watching them.

Despite its strengths, naturalistic observation also has its pitfalls. Researchers need to ensure that their subjects do not know they are being observed. Otherwise, they might not act normally. As we discuss in the chapter on social influence, social psychologists have discovered some clever ways to observe behavior without making people self-conscious. Another problem with naturalistic observation is that some behaviors researchers want to study are rare. Imagine waiting around on a street corner for a homicide to occur. Even in the worst of neighborhoods you would spend a long time waiting for your first observation.

A final problem is that, unless the observation is conducted very systematically, biased expectations may lead the observer to ignore some influences on behavior and exaggerate others. A researcher's hypothesis may lead that researcher to search for supportive information but fail to notice inconsistent evidence. This problem is called **observer bias**. For instance, if you expected to see flirtatious behaviors in a bar, you might misinterpret a woman's hair-flip as flirtation, when all she was really trying to do was keep her hair from falling into her beer mug.



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Studying flirtation gestures. Monica Moore used naturalistic observation to study the gestures women use to flirt, recording women's spontaneous behaviors in a singles' bar, a library, or a women's center meeting.

CASE STUDIES Another observational method is the **case study**, an intensive examination of one individual or group. A researcher could study a completely normal individual or group but often selects a case because it represents some unusual pattern of behavior. Imagine that you were interested in studying how people respond when they are catapulted from social obscurity into the ranks of the rich and famous. If you sampled a random group of the population at a shopping mall or in a psychology class, you might not find anyone famous. However, you could interview J.K. Rowling or Malala Yousafzai.

Psychologists sometimes use case studies when they want to better understand a rare or unusual individual or group. For example, social psychologist Mark Schaller (1997) was interested in studying what happens to people's feelings about themselves when they suddenly become famous. Schaller examined case materials from the lives and writings of several famous individuals, including rock star Kurt Cobain, who committed suicide at the peak of his fame during the 1990s. As Cobain's story illustrates, the case materials suggested that fame isn't always good fortune and can actually lead some people to unpleasantly high levels of self-concern.

Case studies can be rich sources of hypotheses. For example, psychologists have proposed many hypotheses about why Vincent van Gogh cut off his ear, wrapped it, and presented it as a gift to a prostitute (Runyan, 1981). According to one hypothesis, he did it to express his anger because she had slept with his friend Paul Gauguin. According to another, he did it because he had unconscious homosexual feelings toward Paul Gauguin and wanted to symbolically emasculate himself because he felt guilty about those feelings. Unfortunately, psychologists who limit themselves to case study material often allow their hypotheses to bias their search through the evidence in a person's life, picking and choosing events to support their favored hunch (Runyan, 1981). On the basis of a single case study, we simply have no way of telling which events in the case have actually *caused* the event of interest and which are irrelevant. A case study can suggest any number of interesting hypotheses. It cannot, however, tell us much about why an event occurred.

Another problem in using case studies has to do with **generalizability**, the extent to which a particular research finding applies to other similar circumstances. After examining only a single case, such as Vincent van Gogh or Malala Yousafzai, we simply cannot know which of the specifics generalize to other similar cases.

Observer bias Error introduced into measurement when an observer overemphasizes behaviors he or she expects to find and fails to notice behaviors he or she does not expect.

Case study An intensive examination of an individual or group.

Generalizability The extent to which the findings of a particular research study extend to other similar circumstances or cases.

Peter Barritt/Alamy Stock Photo

The problems of the case study method. Psychologists have used details of Vincent van Gogh's life to support dozens of different hypotheses about why he cut off his own ear. However, a single case does not allow clear cause-and-effect conclusions.

ARCHIVES One solution to the problem of generalizability is to examine a number of similar cases. Consider a study of police reports for 512 homicides committed in Detroit during 1972. Here is one:

> Case 185: Victim (male, age 22) and offender (male, age 41) were in a bar when a mutual acquaintance walked in. Offender bragged to victim of "this guy's" fighting ability and that they had fought together. Victim replied "you are pretty tough" and an argument ensued over whether victim or offender was the better man. Victim then told offender "I got mine" (gun) and the offender replied "I got mine too," both indicating their pockets. The victim then said "I don't want to die and I know you don't want to die. Let's forget about it." But the offender produced a small automatic, shot the victim dead, and left the bar. (Wilson & Daly, 1985, p. 64)[1]

Although the details of this particular case may be unique, Margo Wilson and Martin Daly found a number of similar details across the hundreds of homicide cases they examined. First, offenders and their victims tended to be males, particularly males in their early twenties. Second, the homicides were often instigated by a conflict over social dominance.

Wilson and Daly's study of homicides is an example of the **archival method**, in which researchers test hypotheses using data that was originally collected for other purposes (police reports, marriage licenses, newspaper articles, and so on). Another archival study found that during George W. Bush's first term as U.S. president (during which he initiated wars with Afghanistan and Iraq) people became more supportive of him after government-issued terror warnings (Willer, 2004). Still other studies have looked at the relationship between daily temperatures in a given city and the number of violent crimes reported on the same day (e.g., Bell, 2005; Cohn & Rotton, 2005; Rinderu, Bushman, & Van Lange, 2018). The advantage of archives is that they provide easy access to an abundance of real-world data. The disadvantage is that many interesting social phenomena do not get recorded. Both the beginning and end of a 2-month-long marriage make it to the public records. However, a 5-year-long live-in relationship that breaks up over an argument about whom to invite to the wedding never registers in the archives.

SURVEYS Some very interesting behaviors are unlikely to be recorded in public records or to be demonstrated in natural settings. For instance, back in the 1940s biologist Alfred Kinsey became curious about the prevalence of sexual behaviors such as masturbation and premarital intercourse. Because these behaviors are rarely done in public, naturalistic observation would not do. Likewise, individual case studies of convicted sex offenders or prostitutes, for example, would be uninformative about normal sexual behavior. Kinsey, therefore, chose the **survey method**, in which the researcher simply asks respondents a series of questions about their behaviors, beliefs, or opinions.

The survey has one very important advantage: It allows a researcher to collect a great deal of data about phenomena that may rarely be demonstrated in public. Like other methods, surveys have drawbacks. First, the respondent may not give accurate information, because of either dishonesty or memory biases. For instance, it is puzzling that men answering surveys often report more heterosexual experiences than do women. Heterosexual men in Britain, France, and the United States report 10 to 12 sexual partners in their lives, whereas women in all these countries report just over three (Einon, 1994). The discrepancy could be due to **social desirability bias**, or the tendency for people to say what they believe is appropriate or acceptable (whether it is true or not). Sexual activity is more socially approved for men (Hyde, 1996). Hence men may thus be more inclined to talk about their sexual escapades or more likely to remember them, or women may be inclined to downplay theirs (Alexander & Fisher, 2003).

Archival method Examination of systematic data originally collected for other purposes (such as marriage licenses or arrest records).

Survey method A technique in which the researcher asks people to report on their beliefs, feelings, or behaviors.

Social desirability bias The tendency for people to say what they believe is appropriate or acceptable.

[1]Wilson, M., & M. Daly "Competitiveness, Risk Taking, and Violence: The Young Male Syndrome." *Ethology and Sociobiology* 6, 59–73. © 1985. p. 64.

Another potential problem with the survey method is obtaining a **representative sample**. A sample is representative when the participants, as a group, have characteristics that match those of the larger population the researcher wants to describe. A representative sample of North American executives would include percentages of men, women, Blacks, Hispanics, Canadians, Midwesterners, and Southerners that reflect the total population of executives on the continent. A small group of male bank executives from Toronto or of Hispanic female executives in the New York fashion industry would not represent North American executives as a whole. The sample for Kinsey's sex survey was composed largely of volunteers from community organizations, which means that many segments of U.S. society were not well represented.

Kinsey's survey may have also faced a problem in which some people selected themselves into, or out of, his sample. Many potential respondents are simply unwilling to volunteer to discuss topics such as their sex lives. Others might relish the opportunity to regale the survey researchers with their wild erotic experiences. If those who do or do not participate are different from the norm in their sexual activities, the researcher might draw erroneous conclusions about the whole population. Carefully constructed surveys can reduce some of these problems. But not all surveys are to be trusted, particularly when they allow subjects to select themselves for participation.

PSYCHOLOGICAL TESTS Are some people more socially skillful than others? Are some people inclined to think critically before allowing themselves to be persuaded by an argument? **Psychological tests** are instruments for assessing differences between people in abilities, cognitions, or chronic motivations. They differ from surveys in that surveys typically aim to get at specific attitudes or behaviors, whereas tests aim to uncover broader underlying traits. Most of us have taken a variety of psychological tests. College aptitude tests (such as the SATs) are designed to distinguish people according to their ability to do well in college. Vocational interest tests (such as the Strong Vocational Interest Blank) are designed to distinguish people in terms of their likely enjoyment of various professions.

Psychological tests are not always perfect indications of the things they are designed to measure. A test of "your ability to get along with your lover" published in a popular magazine, for example, may be a poor predictor of your actual skills at relationships. There are two criteria a psychological test must meet before it is useful—reliability and validity.

Reliability is the consistency of the test's results. If a test of social skills indicates that you are highly charismatic the first time you take it but socially inept when you take it a week later, your score is unreliable. To measure anything, it is essential that the measurement instrument be consistent. Some psychological tests, such as the famous Rorschach inkblots, do not provide very reliable measurements; others, such as IQ tests, yield much more consistent scores. Even if a test is reliable, however, it may not be valid.

Validity is the extent to which the test measures what it is designed to measure. To use a rather unlikely example, we could theoretically use eye color as a measure of desirability to the opposite sex. Our test would be very reliable—trained observers would agree well about who had blue, hazel, and brown eyes, and subjects' eye color would certainly not change very much if we measured it again a month or two later. Yet eye color would probably not be a valid index of attractiveness—it would probably not relate to the number of dates a person had in the last year, for instance. However, if judges rated the attractiveness of the whole face, or a videotape of the person engaged in conversation, the scores might be a little less reliable but more valid as predictors of dating desirability.

Reliability and validity can be issues for all methods. For instance, archival records of men's and women's age differences at marriage are reasonably consistent across different cultures and time periods (Campos et al., 2002; Kenrick & Keefe, 1992; Sohn, 2017). Hence they give a reliable estimate (several times as many women as men get married in their teens, for example). Yet the marriage records from one month in one small town would probably be unreliable (perhaps two teenage boys and only one teenage girl got married that particular month). With regard to validity, three different environmental surveys might agree that people are doing more

Representative sample A group of respondents having characteristics that match those of the larger population the researcher wants to describe.

Psychological test Instrument for assessing a person's abilities, cognitions, or motivations.

Reliability The consistency of the score yielded by a psychological test.

Validity The extent to which a test measures what it is designed to measure.

recycling and driving less. Yet those survey responses, though reliable, might not be valid: People might consistently misrepresent their recycling or driving habits. It is thus important to ask about any research study: Are the results reliable? That is, would we get the same results if the measurement was done in a different way or by a different observer? And are the results valid? That is, is the researcher really studying what he or she intends to study?

INVESTIGATION

Imagine that you work for a magazine and you have been assigned to write a series of articles on how a particular interesting group of people (Utah polygynists, New York gang members, or Hollywood superstars, for example) differs from the prototypical American suburbanite. Which of the different descriptive methods could you use to address this question, and what problems would you run into in drawing confident conclusions?

1.4.2 Correlation and Causation

Data from descriptive methods can reveal **correlation**, or the extent to which two or more variables occur together (psychologists use the term *variable* to refer broadly to any factor that fluctuates, such as daily temperature, people's height, hair color, the size of a crowd, or the amount of alcohol consumed on different college campuses). Leon Mann (1981) was interested in investigating which variables might be linked to the puzzling phenomenon of suicide baiting, in which onlookers encourage a suicidal person to jump to his or her death. In one case, a nighttime crowd of 500 onlookers not only urged Gloria Polizzi to jump off a 150-foot water tower but also screamed obscenities and threw stones at the rescue squad. Using newspaper archives to study the topic, Mann discovered that suicide baiting was correlated with the size of the crowd. As crowds got larger, they were more likely to taunt someone perched on the edge of life.

A correlation between two variables is often expressed mathematically in terms of a statistic called **correlation coefficient**. Correlation coefficients can range from +1.0, indicating a perfect positive relationship between two variables, through 0, indicating absolutely no relationship, to –1.0, indicating a perfect negative relationship. A positive correlation means that as one variable goes up or down, the other goes up or down with it. As crowds got larger, for example, the amount of suicide baiting increased.

A negative correlation indicates a reverse relationship—as one variable goes up or down, the other goes in the opposite direction. For instance, women who are *more* committed to, and more satisfied with, their current partners generally spend *less* time paying attention to other attractive men (Lydon & Karremans, 2015; Maner et al., 2003; Miller, 1997).

Correlations can provide important hints, but they do not enable a researcher to draw conclusions about cause and effect. Consider the case of crowd size and suicide baiting. Large crowds are associated with many forms of otherwise inappropriate behavior, as can often be observed at a rock concert or a Halloween block party. It seemed plausible to conclude, as Mann did in his study of suicide baiting, that large crowds led onlookers to feel anonymous. This, in turn, could reduce their concern about being identified as the perpetrators of such a cruel and nasty deed. However, it is important to keep in mind that correlation does not equal causation.

Correlation The extent to which two or more variables are associated with one another.

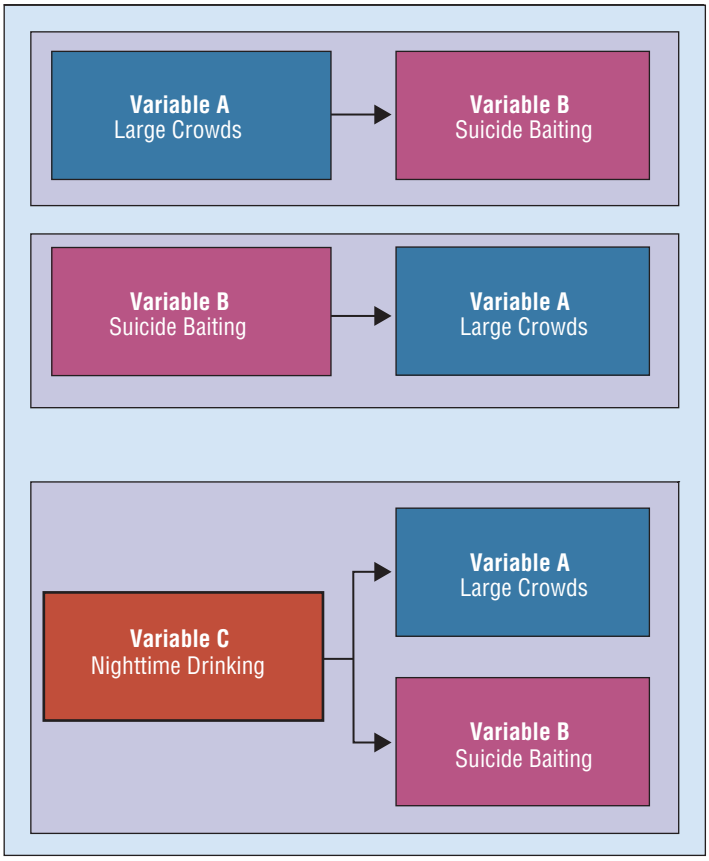
Correlation coefficient A mathematical expression of the relationship between two variables.

Why doesn't correlation equal causation? For one thing, it is always possible that the presumed direction of causality is reversed—that B causes A rather than A causing B (see Figure 1.3). For instance, once the suicide baiting started, it may have been reported on the radio, inspiring nearby listeners to go view the spectacle (thus suicide baiting would have caused crowds rather than the other way around). Another problem is that correlations can be found when there is no causal relationship at all, as when

a third variable C is causing both A and B. For instance, Mann also found that suicide baiting occurred more frequently at night. Perhaps people are more likely to be drinking alcohol at night, and drunks are more likely to be gregarious (hence to join crowds) and unruly (hence to taunt potential suicides). If so, neither darkness nor the size of the crowd was a direct cause of suicide baiting; each was related only incidentally.

Because of the different possible connections between correlated variables, then, it is difficult to draw clear causal conclusions from correlations. To make conclusions about cause and effect, researchers turn to the experimental method, in which variables are teased apart from the other factors that normally co-occur with them.

Figure 1.3 Explaining Correlations



When two variables (such as crowd size and suicide baiting) are correlated, it is possible that variable A (crowd size, in this example) leads to changes in variable B (suicide baiting, in this case). It is also possible, however, that variable B causes variable A, or that a third variable C (such as nighttime drinking, in this example) causes both A and B independently.

1.4.3 Experimental Methods

When using descriptive methods, researchers try to avoid interfering with the phenomenon they are studying. A researcher using naturalistic observation hopes his subjects don't notice that they are being observed, for example, and a survey researcher tries not to word questions so as to lead people to misrepresent their true feelings or behaviors. In an **experiment**, however, the researcher actually sets out to alter people's behavior by systematically manipulating one aspect of the situation while controlling others. When he boarded the school bus to shoot Malala Yousafzai and two other teenage girls, the would-be assassin had his face covered with a handkerchief. Does being anonymous increase the inclination to act in a violent manner? If a researcher wanted to know whether anonymity actually *causes* people to act more aggressively, that researcher could vary the situation so that some people felt especially anonymous while others felt especially identifiable. In fact, Philip Zimbardo (1969) did just that while asking students in a laboratory experiment to deliver electric shocks to a fellow student. Half the participants wore name tags and remained in their own clothes and were thus made easily identifiable. To make the other participants anonymous, they were outfitted with oversized white coats and hoods that completely covered their faces. These anonymous subjects delivered twice as much shock as did those who were left identifiable.

MANIPULATING VARIABLES The variable manipulated by the experimenter is called the **independent variable**. In Zimbardo's experiment, the independent variable was the type of clothing worn (anonymous versus identifiable). The variable that is measured is called the **dependent variable**. In this case, the experimenter measured the amount of shock delivered by the subject.

There are several things to note about experiments. A key feature of Zimbardo's experiment is that participants were randomly assigned to the anonymous and nonanonymous conditions. **Random assignment** means each participant has an equal probability of being in the different conditions. By assigning participants to the two groups on the basis of a coin flip, for instance, a researcher reduces the chances that the groups are different in terms of mood, personality, social class, or other factors that might affect the outcomes. In this way the researcher minimizes any systematic differences between the groups, such as those that might have characterized suicide observers in nighttime versus daytime crowds. Although large suicide-baiting crowds could have differed from

Experiment A research method in which the researcher sets out to systematically manipulate one source of influence while holding others constant.

Independent variable The variable manipulated by the experimenter.

Dependent variable The variable measured by the experimenter.

Random assignment The practice of assigning participants to treatments so each person has an equal chance of being in any condition.

Philip G. Zimbardo, Inc.

Experimenting with deindividuation. In Zimbardo's experiment, half the subjects dressed in clothing making them anonymous and the other half stayed in their normal clothes and were visible to others. That difference constituted the independent variable. The dependent variable was the amount of shock delivered to a fellow subject.

small nonbaiting crowds in other ways related to antisocial tendencies, such systematic differences are not a problem when participants are randomly assigned. In Zimbardo's study, the only differences among subjects were due to random variations in the population (which are reduced in importance as the experimenter runs large groups of subjects). It was also important that only the anonymity of clothing (the independent variable) varied from one group of subjects to another. All other aspects of the situation were the same—the experimenter, the setting, the victim, and the task. This also reduces the likelihood that these other variables might have influenced the antisocial behavior. Finally, aggressiveness was measured in an identical fashion for the high- and low-anonymity subjects, enabling the experimenter to quantify reliably the exact amount of shock that the different subjects delivered in each condition.

By randomly assigning subjects and controlling extraneous variables, the experimenter gains an important advantage—the ability to make statements about causal relationships. Zimbardo could be fairly confident that it was something about his manipulation of anonymity, rather than something about the different subjects in the anonymous condition, that led to the higher level of aggression.

POTENTIAL LIMITATIONS OF THE EXPERIMENTAL METHOD Despite its advantage over descriptive methods in making causal statements, the experiment has its own drawbacks. For one, the laboratory settings used in most experiments are artificial. Is the anonymity created by wearing a big coat and hood really the same as that experienced in a large crowd on a dark night? Is the tendency to deliver shock really the same as the tendency to throw rocks at suicide rescue squads?

We discussed the concept of validity in psychological tests—whether a test measures what it intends to measure. The same question can be asked of experiments (Aronson et al., 1998). **Internal validity** is the extent to which an experiment allows confident conclusions about cause and effect. Was the independent variable the sole cause of any systematic variations in the participants' behaviors? Imagine if, in Zimbardo's deindividuation experiment, all the subjects in the anonymous condition were met by an obnoxious male experimenter, whereas all the subjects in the nonanonymous condition were met by a pleasant female. If the subjects in the anonymous condition behaved more aggressively, we would not know whether it was because the subject was anonymous or because the experimenter was obnoxious. A variable that systematically changes along with the independent variable is called a **confound**. In this imaginary case, the sex and temperament of the experimenter are both confounded with anonymity. Such confounding variables are like the invisible third variables in correlations—they make it difficult to know what caused the subject's behavior.

External validity is the extent to which the results of an experiment can be generalized to other circumstances. We mentioned earlier that studying a single case raises a problem of generalizability. The same problem comes up with regard to laboratory experiments as well. Does delivering shock in an anonymous laboratory experiment tap the same processes as being in a large mob on a dark night, for instance? Perhaps not. Certainly, no two situations are identical, but experimenters try to pick variables that tap the same mental and emotional processes as those operating in the wider world.

One problem in generalizing from laboratory studies to natural behavior is that participants know they are being observed in the lab. As we noted with naturalistic observation, people sometimes act differently when they know they are being watched. **Demand characteristics** are cues in the experiment that make subjects aware of how the experimenter expects them to behave. Experimenters try to avoid this problem by distracting participants from an experiment's true purpose. For instance, an experimenter would not tell subjects, "We are examining how long you hold down the shock button, as an index of hostility." Instead, the experimenter would offer a plausible reason for

Internal validity The extent to which an experiment allows confident statements about cause and effect.

Confound A variable that systematically changes along with the independent variable, potentially leading to a mistaken conclusion about the effect of the independent variable.

External validity The extent to which the results of an experiment can be generalized to other circumstances.

Demand characteristic Cue that makes participants aware of how the experimenter expects them to behave.

administering shock—to study how punishment affects learning, for example. This shifts attention from the participant's use of shock to the recipient's "learning responses." As you will see, social psychologists have developed some rather skillful methods of engaging subjects' natural reactions. But it is always important to be on the lookout for these possible confounds. For example, do you think that having students in the anonymity experiment wear oversized white coats and hoods (not unlike those worn by members of the Ku Klux Klan) might have communicated an expectation to act antisocially?

FIELD EXPERIMENTS One way to overcome the hurdles of artificiality and demand characteristics is to bring the experiment out of the laboratory and into an everyday setting. This approach of using experimental manipulations on unknowing participants in natural settings is called **field experimentation**.

Consider a study in which the researchers took advantage of a naturally occurring manipulation of anonymity—the disguises worn by Halloween trick-or-treaters (Diener et al., 1976). Participants were children in costumes who arrived to trick-or-treat at a house in Seattle. The trick-or-treaters were greeted by a research assistant who pointed to a bowl of candies alongside a bowl of pennies. She told them to take *one* of the candies each and then she hurried off, claiming to be busy. Unbeknownst to the children, the researchers were watching from a hidden location and recording whether the little angels and superheroes took extra candies or filched some coins from the money bowl.

What made this an experiment is that the researchers randomly assigned groups of children to different levels of anonymity. Anonymity was manipulated by the way in which the experimenter greeted the children. In half the cases, she asked each child his or her name, thus removing the identity shield of the costume. In the other half, she allowed them to remain anonymous. The results supported the correlational findings obtained by Mann and the laboratory findings obtained by Zimbardo. When left anonymous, the majority of little devils grabbed more than they had been told to take. When they had been asked to identify themselves, however, most of them acted more angelically.

1.4.4 Why Social Psychologists Combine Different Methods

Table 1.2 summarizes the different methods and their main strengths and limitations. If each method has weaknesses, is the pursuit of social psychological knowledge hopeless? Not at all. The weaknesses of one method are often the strengths of another. For instance, experiments allow researchers to make cause–effect conclusions but have problems of artificiality. In contrast, archival methods and naturalistic observations do not allow cause–effect conclusions (because they are correlational), but the data they provide are not at all artificial. By *combining the different methods*, social psychologists can reach more trustworthy conclusions than any single method can provide (McGrath et al., 1982).

Consider a program of research that used multiple methods to examine the hypothesis that giving to others makes us happier (Aknin et al., 2013; Dunn & Norton, 2013). Elizabeth Dunn and her colleagues first conducted a survey to test this hypothesis (Dunn et al., 2008). In an initial correlational study, they asked a nationally representative sample of 632 Americans to rate their general happiness and to estimate what percentage of their income they spent on bills, on themselves personally, on gifts for others, and on donations to charity. Spending money on gifts for themselves was not related to respondents' happiness, but spending on other people was. Because this result is a correlation, we can't be sure whether spending on others caused people to be happier or whether unhappy people simply tend also to be less generous (and might be made even less happy if they spent money on others). The researchers then conducted a longitudinal study of people who received an unexpected bonus at work and measured their happiness both before the bonus and six to eight weeks later. Those who had spent more of their bonus on other people experienced a significant boost in

Field experimentation The manipulation of independent variables using unknowing participants in natural settings.

Table 1.2 Summary of Research Methods Used by Social Psychologists

Method	Description	Strengths	Weaknesses
Descriptive Correlational Methods			
Naturalistic observation	Inconspicuous recording of behavior as it occurs in a natural setting **Example:** Moore's study of flirtation behavior in women	• Taps into people's spontaneous real-world behaviors • Doesn't rely on people's ability to report on their own experiences	• Researcher may interfere with ongoing behavior. • Some interesting behaviors are very rare. • Researcher may selectively attend to certain events and ignore others (observer bias).
Case studies	Intensive examination of a single person or group **Example:** Schaller's study of fame and self-awareness	• Provides a source of hypotheses • Allows study of rare behaviors	• Observer bias • Difficult to generalize findings from a single case • Impossible to reconstruct causes from complexity of past events
Archives	Examination of public records for multiple cases **Example:** Wilson and Daly's study of police homicide reports	• Easy access to large amounts of prerecorded data	• Many interesting social behaviors are never recorded.
Surveys	Researcher asking people direct questions **Example:** Kinsey's study of sexual behavior	• Allows study of difficult-to-observe behaviors, thoughts, and feelings	• People who respond may not be representative. • Participants may be biased or untruthful in responses.
Psychological tests	Researcher attempting to assess an individual's abilities, cognitions, motivations, or behaviors **Example:** Strong Vocational Interest Blank; SATs	• Allows measurement of characteristics that are not always easily observable	• Tests may be unreliable (yielding inconsistent scores). • Tests may be reliable but not valid (not measuring the actual characteristic they are designed to measure).
Experimental Methods			
Laboratory experiment	Researcher directly manipulating variables and observing their effects on the behavior of laboratory participants **Example:** Zimbardo's study of aggression and anonymity	• Allows cause–effect conclusions • Allows control of extraneous variables	• Artificial manipulations may not represent relevant events as they naturally unfold. • Participants' responses may not be natural because they know they are being observed.
Field experiment	Same as laboratory experiment but subjects in natural settings **Example:** Diener et al.'s study of trick-or-treaters	• Allows cause–effect conclusions • Participants give more natural responses.	• Manipulations may not be natural. • Less control of extraneous factors than in a laboratory experiment

happiness; those who had spent more on themselves did not. This longitudinal study allowed the researchers to control for initial levels of happiness, but it still does not nail down a cause-and-effect relationship (besides chronic happiness levels, there might have been something else different about the people who chose to spend their money on others). So the researchers conducted an experimental study in which they asked a group of college students to rate their happiness in the morning, then gave them an envelope containing $5 or $20, and randomly assigned them to spend the money either on themselves or on others (by buying someone a gift or giving the money to charity). At the end of the day, the students again reported how happy they were. Those who had spent their money on themselves had not changed since the morning, but those who spent their money on others were happier. Interestingly, when asked to predict what would make them happier, other students (incorrectly) thought that they would be happiest if they got $20 to spend on themselves. Perhaps, one could argue, the experiment was not natural because participants might have guessed that the researchers were interested in their happiness and had obviously given them money between two measurements of happiness. However, because the results converge nicely with the

other two correlational studies, showing a similar relationship in natural contexts, the researchers could be much more confident than if they had used only one method.

THE RESEARCHER AS A DETECTIVE The psychologist's situation is analogous to that of a detective confronted with stories from several witnesses to a murder, each less than perfect. The blind woman overheard the argument but couldn't see who pulled the trigger. The deaf man saw someone enter the room just before the murder but didn't hear the shot. The child was there to see and hear but tended to mix up the details. Despite the problems presented by each witness, if they all agree that the butler did it, it would be wise to check his fingerprints against those on the gun. Like the detective, the social psychologist is always confronted with bits of evidence that are, by themselves, imperfect but together may add up to a compelling case.

Just as detectives go back and forth between evidence and hunches—using evidence to educate their hunches and hunches to lead the search for new evidence—so, too, social psychologists go full cycle between the laboratory and the natural world (Cialdini, 1995). Evidence from descriptive studies conducted in the real world leads to theories that researchers test with rigorous experiments. The results of these theory-testing experiments lead back to new hunches about natural events in the real world. By combining different kinds of evidence, then, it is possible to come to more confident conclusions.

REPLICATION, ALTERNATIVE EXPLANATIONS, AND SCIENTIFIC SKEPTICISM As we have noted, there are strengths and weaknesses to every research method, and there are often several alternative explanations for any given finding. A central part of scientific research is to think critically not only about untested ideas but also about research findings. Because there are thousands of researchers asking questions about social behavior, some of the findings from particular studies may be random. There are numerous ways of dealing with these issues (Dovidio, 2016; Stroebe & Strack, 2014). For instance, psychologists can use the technique of meta-analysis, which we will discuss in more detail in Chapter 10, to statistically pool the results of multiple studies on the same topic (e.g. Eagly & Johnson, 1990; Malouff & Schutte, 2017). Presumably the error in any given study will wash out over numerous studies. As an educated person, it is important to maintain a critical attitude and not to blindly accept generalizations stated by "experts" on television, in newspapers, or in online media. It is always important to ask: How strong is the evidence for what this expert is saying? Does the evidence **replicate** across multiple studies and multiple methods? At the same time, it is important to keep your own biases in check. There is a strong tendency to be more skeptical of findings that disagree with what we want to be true (Lord et al., 1979; Washburn & Skitka, 2017). One should be especially skeptical of people whose vested interests motivate them to draw conclusions that run counter to all the scientific evidence on a topic, as when Scott Pruitt, an outspoken opponent of environmental protections, and champion of the oil industry, used his appointment as Donald Trump's director of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to raise doubts about research on global warming (opposing the conclusions of virtually all the scientists who had worked on this topic). Social psychological principles can be helpful not only in understanding our biased processing of scientific findings but also in overcoming those biases (Hornsey & Fielding, 2017; Kenrick, Cohen, Neuberg, & Cialdini, 2018).

INVESTIGATION

You are a member of a research team, and you've been assigned to answer the following questions: How does alcohol affect our memory for the faces of new people we meet? How would you use a correlational approach to explore this question? How would you use an experimental approach? What are the greatest strengths and weaknesses of each approach likely to be?

Replicate With regard to research, to reproduce the findings of a particular study using different populations of participants, or somewhat different procedures or measures.

1.4.5 Ethical Issues in Social Psychological Research

In reading about Zimbardo's study of aggression and anonymity, you might have wondered how the participants ended up feeling about themselves after delivering shocks to fellow students. Unlike research in geology or chemistry, social psychological research is conducted with living, breathing, feeling human beings (and sometimes other living creatures). This makes it important to consider another question: Is the research ethically justifiable?

ETHICAL RISKS IN SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGICAL RESEARCH Consider some of the research that we, the authors of this text, have conducted. One of us induced students to give up some of their blood using the following deceptive technique: "Would you be willing to join our long-term blood donor program and give a pint of blood every 6 weeks for a minimum of 3 years? No? Then how about just a single pint tomorrow?" (Cialdini & Ascani, 1976). Another one of us asked students whether they had ever had a homicidal fantasy, and, if so, to describe it in detail (Kenrick & Sheets, 1994). And in another investigation, we asked people to level with us about any prejudicial emotional reactions they felt toward different groups (including feminists, Christians, European Americans, African Americans and gay men) (Cottrell & Neuberg, 2005).

These studies yielded potentially useful information about charitable contributions, violent impulses, and prejudicial emotions. Yet each raised the sort of ethical questions that social psychologists confront frequently. Asking people about homicidal fantasies or prejudicial feelings constitutes a potential *invasion of privacy*. The invasion may not be egregious, because participants were volunteers who had the right to refrain from sharing any information if they so wished. But are researchers still violating social conventions by even asking? The problem of invasion of privacy becomes even more acute with naturalistic observations and field experiments, in which participants may not know that they are disclosing information about themselves. In one controversial study, unknowing participants were approached by a private detective who offered them an opportunity to help the government gather evidence by illegally breaking into an office (West et al., 1975). Is this sort of invasion of privacy justified in the interest of finding out about human behavior? The general rule of thumb psychologists follow is that using unwitting subjects is acceptable if they are left completely anonymous and if they will not be induced to perform behaviors that they would not do otherwise (no actual break-ins occurred, for example).

In experiments people's behavior is manipulated, which raises another question: Will this research produce physical or psychological injury to the subject? Social psychological studies sometimes involve unpleasant physical manipulations, including strenuous exercise (Allen et al., 1989), injections of drugs such as adrenaline (Schachter & Singer, 1962), exposure to uncomfortable heat (Rule, Taylor, & Dobbs, 1987), or ingestion of alcohol (MacDonald, Fong, et al., 2000).

Physical dangers are generally less of a problem in social psychology than in medical research (in which the manipulations may actually lead to illness or death), but there are discomforts and slight risks nevertheless. Social psychological research is more likely to involve psychological injury, ranging from embarrassment (from being "taken in" by a deceptive cover story, for example) through guilt (for thoughts about homicidal fantasies or alternative romantic partners) to anxiety (produced by the threat of electric shock).

In perhaps the most controversial study in social psychology, Stanley Milgram (1963) led participants to think that they were delivering painful electric shocks to an older man who had a heart condition. Partway through the experiment, the older man completely stopped responding, yet

Alexandra Milgram

A scene from an ethically controversial experiment. In Milgram's research on obedience to authority, subjects were led to believe that they were delivering electric shocks to a man (shown here) who said that he had a heart condition. The research raised questions about exposing subjects to psychological discomfort.

the experimenter insisted that subjects continue to deliver higher and higher levels of shock. Subjects in this study showed extreme levels of anxiety, including "profuse sweating, trembling, and stuttering." Although this study was the subject of a rousing ethical controversy, Milgram (1964) defended it by pointing out that no participant showed evidence of lasting harm. In fact, 74% thought that they had learned something important. A year later, one subject wrote: "This experiment has strengthened my belief that man should avoid harm to his fellow man even at the risk of violating authority" (Milgram, 1964, p. 850). Milgram argued that researchers study controversial topics in the sincere hope that it "will lead to human betterment, not only because enlightenment is more dignified than ignorance, but because new knowledge is pregnant with human consequences."

ETHICAL SAFEGUARDS IN SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGICAL RESEARCH Social psychological research holds the promise of potential benefits—as any knowledge about love, prejudice, or homicidal violence could be used to better society. Yet the benefits must be weighed against the costs. How much discomfort for the participant is acceptable?

Fortunately, there are safeguards against abuses of scientific inquiry. For one, the American Psychological Association (APA) has a set of ethical guidelines for research. According to these guidelines, participants in psychological studies are told they are free to withdraw before consenting to any potentially injurious procedures, and they are debriefed after the research is completed. **Debriefing** involves discussing procedures and hypotheses with the participants, addressing any negative reactions they had, and alleviating any problems before they leave. The APA guidelines also encourage psychologists to ask about costs and benefits: Does the research have the potential to produce useful knowledge that might justify temporary discomforts? For instance, Milgram argued that his study of obedience gave us insights into the horrible events in Nazi Germany.

As another ethical safeguard, any institution applying for federal research funding (as do most colleges and universities) is required to have an institutional review board that evaluates the potential costs and benefits of research. Members of this board have no stake in the studies under consideration. They commonly ask researchers to revise manipulations, consent forms, or debriefing procedures. Using these safeguards, psychologists hope to optimize the trade-off between subject discomfort and potential knowledge.

Social Psychology's Bridges with Other Areas of Knowledge

LO 1.5 Discuss the links between social psychology and (1) other disciplines of psychology and (2) disciplines outside psychology.

As we have noted, social psychology is in many ways the ultimate bridging discipline. Social psychologists share many theories, methods, and research findings with researchers in other disciplines. Thus, you can make better sense of social psychology if you understand how it fits with other areas of knowledge.

1.5.1 Social Psychology and Other Areas of Psychology

Social psychology has direct bridges to all the other areas of psychology. Consider two central areas of experimental psychology—*cognitive psychology* (the study of mental processes) and *behavioral neuroscience* (the study of how biochemistry and neural structures relate to behavior). Social psychologists are increasingly studying how other people affect our physiological processes such as blood pressure, heart rate, and eyeblink responses (e.g., Amodio & Ratner, 2013; Doré, Zerubavel, & Ochsner, 2015; Fritz, Nagurney, & Hegelson, 2003; Mendes et al., 2003). An increasingly important subdiscipline emerging from this work is called *social neuroscience* (the study of how social

Debriefing A discussion of procedures, hypotheses, and participant reactions at the completion of a study.

behavior is linked to events in the brain and other branches of the nervous system) (e.g., Berntson & Cacioppo, 2000; Dickerson et al., 2004; Lieberman, 2007; Varnum et al., 2012). For example, one study used magnetic resonance imagining (MRI) to study brainwave activity in White college students while they were exposed to faces of Black men. Negative feelings toward Black males were linked to activity in the amygdala (an area linked to emotional evaluation) when students were shown Black strangers, but not when they were shown familiar and positively regarded Black men (such as Martin Luther King Jr., Will Smith, and Denzel Washington) (Phelps et al., 2000). Another facet of social neuroscience involves studying brain-damaged patients for clues about how the brain, cognition, and social behavior are interlinked (Stone et al., 2002). One particular form of brain damage leads to a disorder called prosopagnosia—the inability to recognize human faces (Rossion et al., 2003).

Social psychology also has close connections with *clinical psychology*—the study of behavioral dysfunction and treatment (e.g., Snyder & Forsyth, 1991; Snyder et al., 2000). Understanding social relationships is essential if a psychologist wants to treat depression or loneliness or hopes to teach people how to deal with everyday stress, for instance (Dandeneau et al., 2007; Fredrickson et al., 2003; Simpson & Overall, 2014). Furthermore, many behavioral disorders are defined by their devastating effects on a person's social life. Throughout this text we will include a special feature, "Bridging Function and Dysfunction," in which we will examine problems rooted in, or causing disruptions for, social relationships. In this feature, we will consider how the social world can affect the disordered individual and how normal group processes can sometimes go awry, from obsessive love relationships to paranoid distrust of "outsiders."

Clinical psychology has traditionally focused on suffering, weakness, and disorder, in hopes of alleviating these problems (Seligman et al., 2005). In contrast, some social psychologists have also become increasingly involved in research on *positive psychology*—the study of factors leading to positive emotions, virtuous behaviors, and optimal performance in people and groups (e.g., Diener & Biswas-Diener, 2008; Gable & Haidt, 2005; Krems, Kenrick, & Neel, 2017; Shiota Neufeld, Danvers, et al., 2014). For example, several psychologists have examined the factors that cause some people to be happy with their social lives (e.g., Lyubomirsky, King, & Diener, 2005; Lyubomirsky, Sheldon, & Schkade, 2005; Myers, 2000; Van Boven, 2005).

Many social psychologists have also been involved in the area of *health psychology*—the study of behavioral and psychological factors that affect illness and physical well-being. Our relationships with other people can have direct consequences for our health, providing buffers against stress when they are going well and leading to health problems when they are going poorly (e.g., Stinson et al., 2008; Taylor, 2015). Social psychologists have also been applying knowledge about social influence to increase healthy behaviors, such as condom use among delinquent youth at risk for HIV (e.g., Bryan, Aiken, & West, 2004).

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Positive psychology After the attempt on her life, Malala Yousafzai persisted in her crusade for girls' education and went on to be the youngest person ever to win the Nobel Peace Prize. Positive psychologists study the virtuous side of human behavior, including courage, creativity, and kindness.

Researchers in the field of *developmental psychology* consider how lifetime experiences combine with predispositions and early biological influences to produce the adult's feelings, thoughts, and behaviors. Social relationships are central to development. For example, social development researchers study how infants become attached to their parents and how these early experiences affect relationships among adults (e.g., Del Giudice, 2009; Rom & Mikulincer, 2003; Sharpsteen & Kirkpatrick, 1997).

Personality psychology addresses differences between people and also examines how individual psychological components add up to a whole person. Many important personality differences are intimately tied to social relationships (e.g., Biesanz et al., 2007; Joireman et al., 2003; Pratto et al., 2013; Webster & Bryan, 2007). For example, two of the characteristics people use most often to describe one another—extraversion and agreeableness—are largely defined by social relationships (e.g., Aron & Aron, 1997; Graziano et al., 1997).

Environmental psychology is the study of people's interactions with the physical and the social environment (e.g., Aarts & Dijksterhuis, 2003).

Environmentally oriented social psychologists study many important societal issues, including why people destroy the physical environment or how they respond to heat spells, water shortages, and urban crowding, and what motivates people to work toward energy conservation (e.g., Campbell, Bush, et al., 2005; Griskevicius, Tybur, & Van den Bergh, 2010; Sng et al., 2017; Schroeder, 1995b; Van Vugt, 2009). These environmental issues will be a major focus of Chapter 13, which addresses global social dilemmas.

INVESTIGATION

Think about your plans following college (or graduate school). In what ways will a better understanding of the principles and findings of social psychology be beneficial to you?

1.5.2 Social Psychology and Other Disciplines

Social psychology is intimately linked not only to other areas of psychology but also to other domains of knowledge. One of the first textbooks in social psychology was written by a sociologist, and the connections with the field of sociology continue to this day. Social psychologists have traditionally focused more on the *individual's* thoughts, feelings, and behaviors, whereas sociologists focus on the level of the group. However, like sociologists, social psychologists often consider how variables such as social class and shared social norms affect behaviors such as prejudice and aggression (e.g., Barnes, Brown, & Tamborski, 2012; Jackson & Esses, 1997; Kraus et al., 2012; Vandello & Cohen, 2003). Social psychologists have begun to consider how group processes may naturally emerge from individual thoughts and behaviors (Kameda et al., 2011; Kerr & Tindale, 2004; Vallacher et al., 2002).

Social psychology is likewise linked with anthropology, a field concerned with the links between human culture and human nature (e.g., Fiske, 2000; Henrich et al., 2006). Anthropologists study cultures around the world for hints about which human social arrangements are universal and which ones vary by culture. Social psychology is also linked to several areas of biology, including genetics and zoology (e.g., Campbell, 1999; Gangestad & Simpson, 2000). Social psychologists also use the methods of neuroscience to examine how hormones and brain structures affect parenting, love relationships, and responses to social stress (e.g., Berntson & Cacioppo, 2000; Diamond, 2003; Lieberman, 2007).

In addition to the bridges linking social psychology with other basic scientific disciplines, the field is also connected to several applied sciences, including law, medicine, business, education, and political science (e.g., Caprara et al., 2003; Kay et al., 2008; Kenrick & Griskevicius, 2013; McCann, 1997; Votruba & Kwan, 2015). For example, social psychological considerations strongly influence responses to evidence presented in a court of law (e.g., Votruba et al., 2014). Many of our interactions with other people take place in school and the workplace, and understanding social psychology can have practical payoffs in those settings. *Industrial/organizational psychology* integrates social psychology and business to understand social relationships in organizations (Pfeffer, 1998; Roberts et al., 2003; Van Vugt, Hogan, & Kaiser, 2008). In the political realm, many of the most pressing problems facing the world today—from environmental destruction to overpopulation to international conflict—are directly linked to social interactions. In our "Bridging Theory and Application" features, we discuss how social psychology can help us understand, and sometimes alleviate, practical problems in arenas ranging from the small classroom to the global ecosystem.

These connections highlight an important point: Although each course in the curriculum focuses on one area of knowledge, all of them are bridged together into a

larger network. Your university education can be viewed as one long course designed to answer several big questions:

- What logical and methodological tools can we use to generate useful knowledge and to distinguish fact from fiction?
- What are the important ideas previous thinkers have had about human nature and our place in the universe, and what is the evidence for those ideas?
- How are those important ideas connected to one another?

Revisiting the Mysteries of Social Life


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We opened the chapter with several mysteries. What would prompt someone to shoot a 14-year-old girl for merely advocating education? Why would someone living in an area of Pakistan controlled by fundamentalist imams take a public stand against the Taliban? How can we get along with our romantic partners? At the more general level, we asked about the factors that lead to charitable behavior, prejudice, divorce, and other social behaviors.

In this first chapter, we have not yet delved into the evidence social psychologists have uncovered about aggression, heroism, or romantic relationships. However, the theoretical and methodological principles we discussed in this chapter have started us on the search for more informed answers. To begin with, by understanding the limitations of case studies we should realize that we can only go so far in reconstructing the particular causes of Malala Yousafzai's willingness to take a public stand against the repressive and violent clerics who had issued death threats against her. One possibility is that she was doing it because she felt anger about having her civil rights violated. Another possibility is that she was modeling her father's behavior, given that he had taken a similar courageous stance against the Taliban. Yet another possibility is that she inherited a genetic proclivity toward rebellious independence from her father. Individual cases can inspire interesting theoretical speculations, but any hypothesis based on a case study ultimately needs to be tested with more rigorous data from diverse and controlled methods. Going full circle, theoretical principles drawn from rigorous research can inspire new ways to think about particular cases in the real world.

Social psychology's theories and methods also provide a set of practical detective tools to address the more general questions raised by particular cases. Theoretical perspectives such as the sociocultural and cognitive approaches give social psychologists clues about probable places to begin their investigations. Research methods such as surveys and experiments provide tools that, like fingerprint kits for a detective, can help researchers see beyond the limitations of the unaided eye. In later chapters, we will review how these different theories and methods have already yielded a wealth of information about the broader questions we raised in this beginning chapter. As we shall see, social psychologists have learned quite a bit about why and how people help, hurt, love, and hate one another, and about the motivations behind charitable and heroic behaviors. We are also beginning to learn about how and why biological factors influence our relationships with other people and about how human biology and human culture interact with one another in dynamic and interesting ways.

Not everyone who reads a social psychology text aspires to a career as a behavioral researcher. But all of us are profoundly affected by the actions of other people—relatives, friends, lovers, coworkers, and even strangers on the street. A basic understanding of social psychology gives you a new set of lenses through which to view the people who affect you so profoundly. As we will see, our everyday intuitions about social behavior are often slightly biased and sometimes deeply wrong. If you try to be aware of other people's deeper motivations and of your own cognitive biases, it can keep you from being blinded by the seemingly "obvious" and also help you appreciate the complexity that lies beneath the surface.

Besides providing potential clues about how to get along with the other people you encounter every day, the principles of social psychology can help you become a more informed citizen. As a voter and perhaps even a potential leader, you will be called on to make important decisions about education, criminal behavior, urban development, and income redistribution. It is hard to make a good decision if you do not know to evaluate the evidence. Finally, studying social psychology and understanding how its findings and theories bridge with other areas of knowledge can provide satisfaction at a purely intellectual level. In the upcoming decades, many of the mysteries of social life will be solved, and the educated mind will be best prepared to marvel at those discoveries.

Chapter Summary

What Is Social Psychology?

LO 1.1 Explain the role of description and theory in the science of social psychology.

1. Social psychology is the scientific study of how people's thoughts, feelings, and behaviors are influenced by other people. Social psychologists aim to describe social behavior carefully and to explain its causes.
2. Theories help connect and organize existing observations and suggest fruitful paths for future research.

Major Theoretical Perspectives of Social Psychology

LO 1.2 Summarize the four major theoretical perspectives of social psychology, and discuss how they work together to explain human social behavior.

1. Researchers who adopt a sociocultural perspective consider how behavior is influenced by factors that operate in larger social groups, including social class, nationality, and cultural norms.
2. The evolutionary perspective focuses on social behaviors as evolved adaptations that helped our ancestors survive and reproduce.
3. The social learning perspective focuses on past learning experiences as determinants of a person's social behavior.
4. The social cognitive perspective focuses on the mental processes involved in paying attention to, interpreting, and remembering social experiences.

Basic Principles of Social Behavior

LO 1.3 Describe the five fundamental motives behind goal-oriented social behavior, and explain what is meant by the person, the situation, and person–situation interactions.

1. Social behavior is goal oriented. People enter social situations with short-term immediate goals, and these are linked to broader long-term goals and ultimately to more fundamental motives (such as establishing social ties, understanding ourselves and others, gaining and maintaining status, defending ourselves and those we value, and attracting and retaining mates).
2. Social behavior represents a continual interaction between features within the person and events in the situation. People and their social situations choose, respond to, and alter one another.

How Psychologists Study Social Behavior

LO 1.4 List the strengths and weaknesses of each of the different descriptive methods (e.g., naturalistic observation, case study) and experimental methods, and explain why researchers find value in combining different methods.

1. Descriptive methods (including naturalistic observations, case studies, archival studies, surveys, and psychological tests) involve recording behaviors, thoughts, and feelings in their natural state. These methods can uncover correlations, but they do not pin down causes.
2. Experimental methods search for causal processes by systematically manipulating some aspect of the situation (called the independent variable). Experiments allow conclusions about cause and effect but are more artificial than many descriptive methods.
3. Ethical issues for researchers include invasion of privacy and potential harm to subjects. These potential dangers must be weighed against the benefits of possibly useful knowledge.

Social Psychology's Bridges with Other Areas of Knowledge

LO 1.5 Discuss the links between social psychology and (1) other disciplines of psychology and (2) disciplines outside psychology.

1. Social psychology is closely connected to other subdisciplines of psychology, including developmental, personality, clinical, cognitive, and physiological psychology.
2. Social psychology also connects to other disciplines, including basic research sciences like biology and sociology, as well as applied fields like organizational behavior and education.

Key Terms

Adaptation, 8
Archival method, 20
Case study, 19
Confound, 24
Correlation, 22
Correlation coefficient, 22
Culture, 6
Debriefing, 29
Demand characteristic, 24
Dependent variable, 23
Descriptive method, 18
Evolutionary perspective, 8
Experiment, 23
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External validity, 24
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