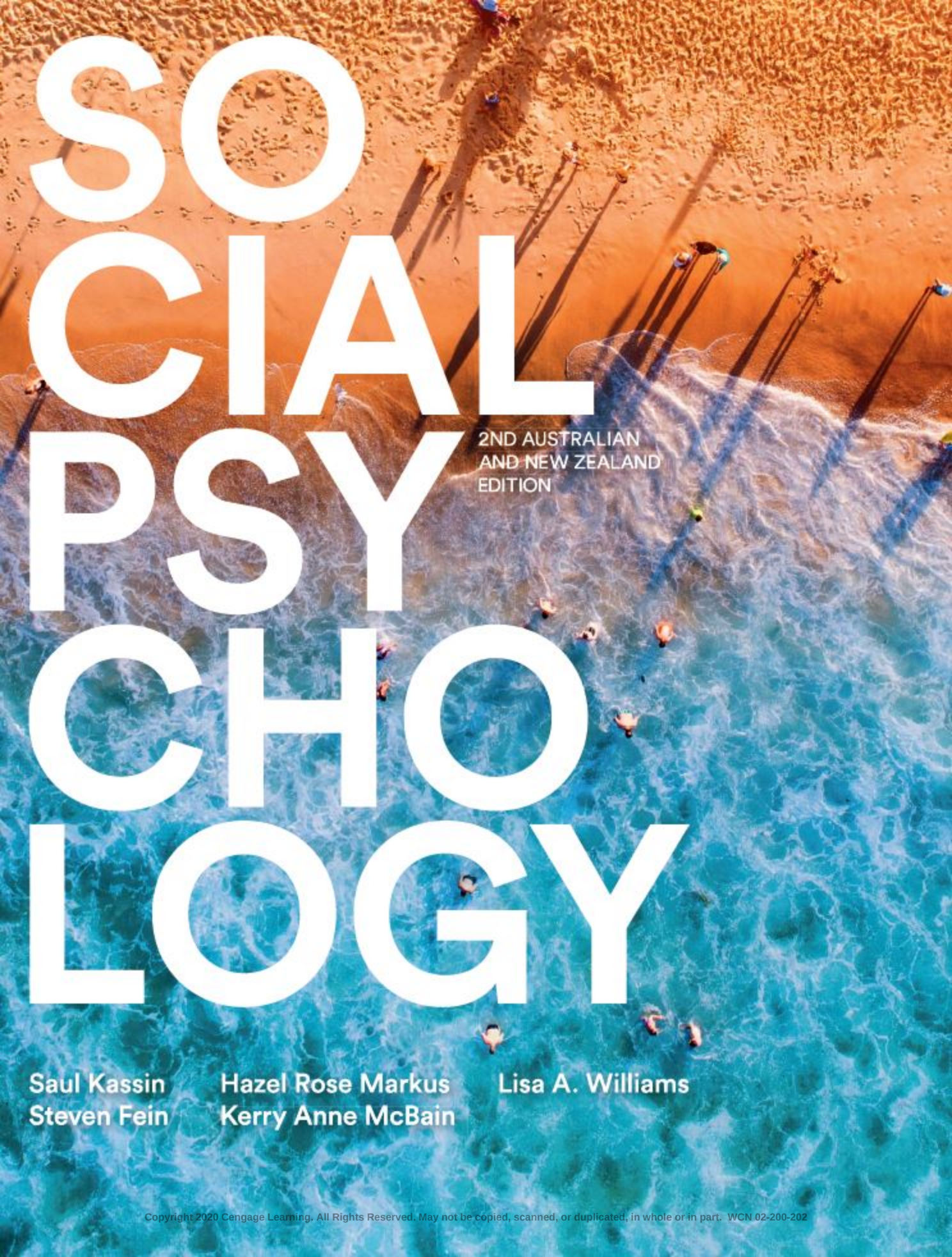

SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY

2ND AUSTRALIAN AND NEW ZEALAND EDITION

Saul Kassin
Steven Fein
Hazel Rose Markus
Kerry Anne McBain
Lisa A. Williams

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SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY

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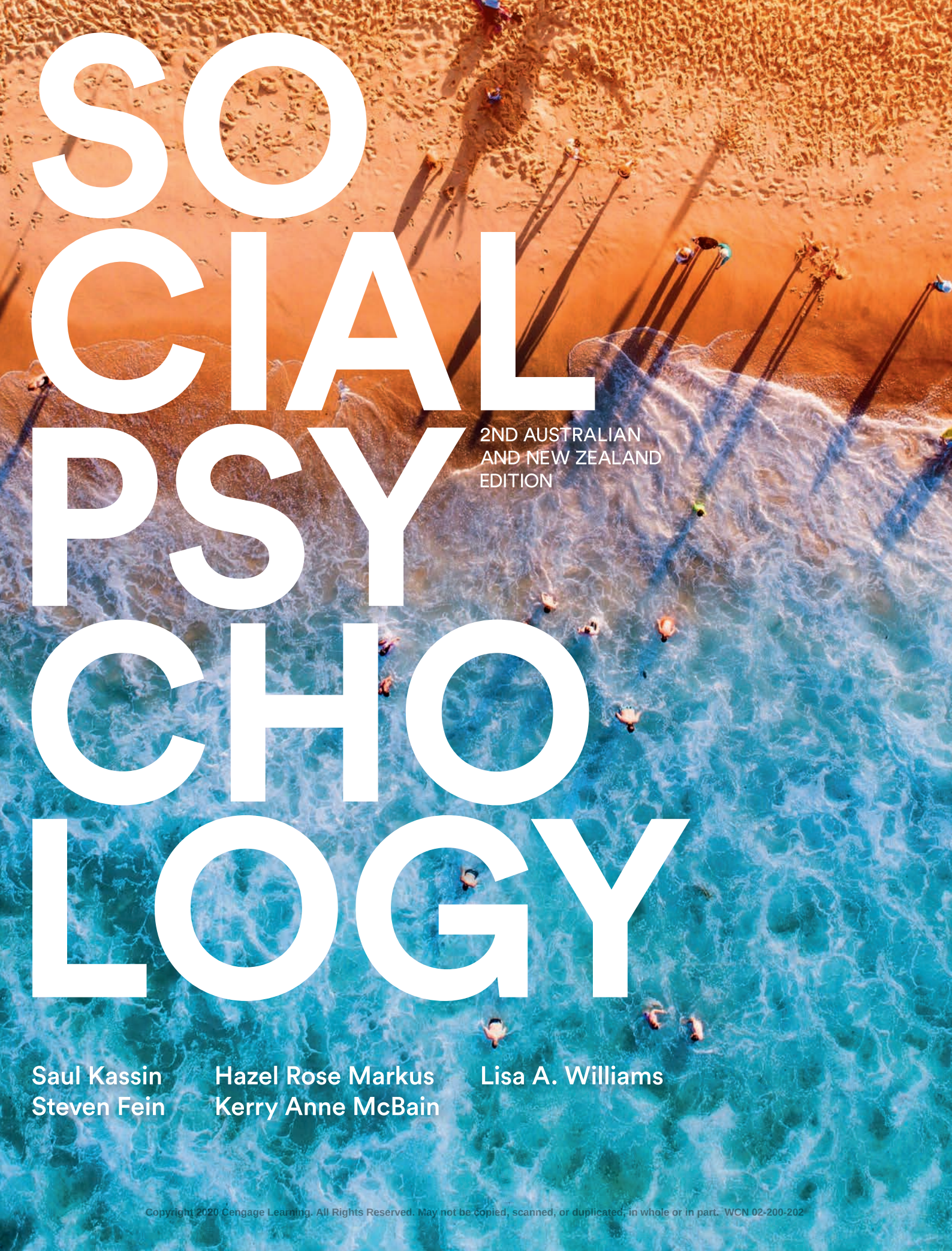

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Guide to the text

As you read this text you will find a number of features in every chapter to enhance your study of Social Psychology and help you understand how the theory is applied in the real world.

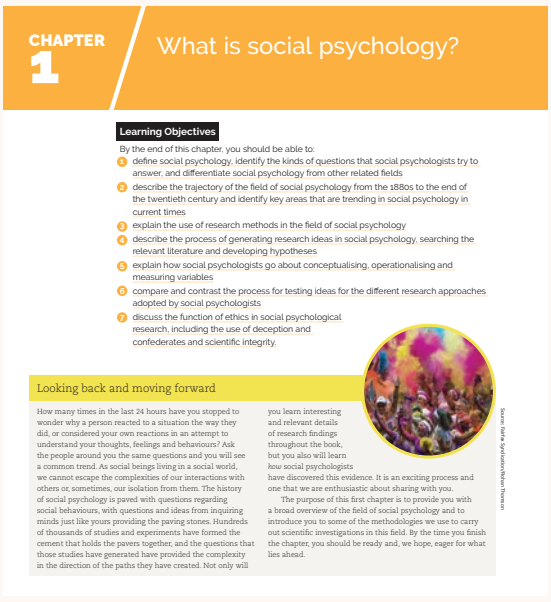
PART OPENING FEATURES

An **Organisational model** included at the beginning of each part introduces the chapters and how they relate to each other to give you an overview of the content ahead.

CHAPTER OPENING FEATURES

Learning objectives give you a clear sense of what each chapter will cover and what you should be able to do after reading the chapter.

An **Opening vignette** introduces and illustrates the chapter topics in a real-world context. This example is revisited in the **Topical reflection** at the end of the chapter to connect student learning of theory back to the real world.



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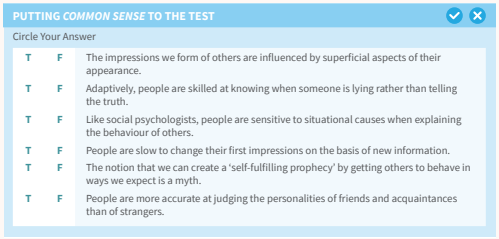
FEATURES WITHIN CHAPTERS

A **Common sense test** in every chapter challenges you to think about your intuitive beliefs of the material covered in the chapter. Find the answers in the margins when the topic is discussed, and explained further in the end of chapter review

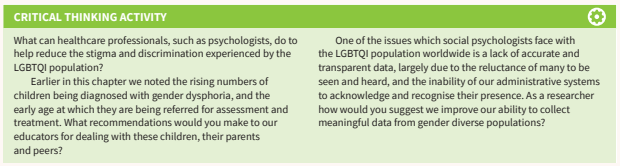


PUTTING *COMMON SENSE* TO THE TEST

Circle Your Answer

T	F	The impressions we form of others are influenced by superficial aspects of their appearance.
T	F	Adaptively, people are skilled at knowing when someone is lying rather than telling the truth.
T	F	Like social psychologists, people are sensitive to situational causes when explaining the behaviour of others.
T	F	People are slow to change their first impressions on the basis of new information.
T	F	The notion that we can create a 'self-fulfilling prophecy' by getting others to behave in ways we expect is a myth.
T	F	People are more accurate at judging the personalities of friends and acquaintances than of strangers.

Challenge the theory you have learned by considering the **Critical thinking activities**, perhaps in group discussion.



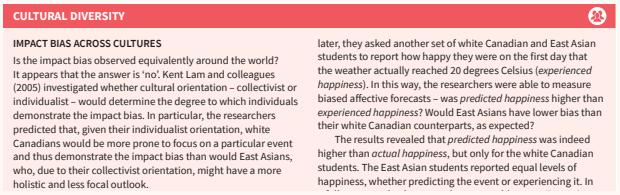
CRITICAL THINKING ACTIVITY

What can healthcare professionals, such as psychologists, do to help reduce the stigma and discrimination experienced by the LGBTQI population?

Earlier in this chapter we noted the rising numbers of children being diagnosed with gender dysphoria, and the early age at which they are being referred for assessment and treatment. What recommendations would you make to our educators for dealing with these children, their parents and peers?

One of the issues which social psychologists face with the LGBTQI population worldwide is a lack of accurate and transparent data, largely due to the reluctance of many to be seen and heard, and the inability of our administrative systems to acknowledge and recognise their presence. As a researcher how would you suggest we improve our ability to collect meaningful data from gender diverse populations?

Explore the similarities and differences that exist in social psychological processes around the world through the **Cultural diversity boxes**.



CULTURAL DIVERSITY

IMPACT BIAS ACROSS CULTURES

Is the impact bias observed equivalently around the world? It appears that the answer is 'no'. Kent Lam and colleagues (2005) investigated whether cultural orientation – collectivist or individualist – would determine the degree to which individuals demonstrate the impact bias. In particular, the researchers predicted that, given their individualist orientation, white Canadians would be more prone to focus on a particular event and thus demonstrate the impact bias than would East Asians, who, due to their collectivist orientation, might have a more holistic and less focal outlook.

later, they asked another set of white Canadian and East Asian students to report how happy they were on the first day that the weather actually reached 20 degrees Celsius (*experienced happiness*). In this way, the researchers were able to measure biased affective forecasts – was *predicted happiness* higher than *experienced happiness*? Would East Asians have lower bias than their white Canadian counterparts, as expected?

The results revealed that *predicted happiness* was indeed higher than *actual happiness*, but only for the white Canadian students. The East Asian students reported equal levels of happiness, whether predicting the event or experiencing it. In

CULTURAL DIVERSITY BOXES

Impact bias across cultures	**Ch 2, p. 46**
Social comparisons in New Zealand	**Ch 2, p. 52**
Terror management worldwide	**Ch 2, p. 61**
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Cultural differences in negotiation	**Ch 8, p. 338**
Perceptions of beauty around the world	**Ch 9, p. 359**
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Ageing well: global trends	**Ch 13, p. 567**
The global divide of sexual orientation	**Ch 13, p. 571**
Work stress around the world	**Ch 14, p. 585**
The daily commute: stress on a global scale	**Ch 14, p. 586**

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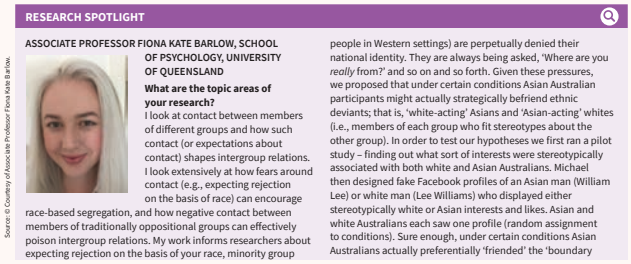
FEATURES WITHIN CHAPTERS

CULTURAL DIVERSITY BOXES

Obesity: the growing epidemic	Ch 14, p. 593
Suspect interviews: the psychology of lie detection	Ch 15, p. 639
Jury decision-making around the world	Ch 15, p. 648
Procedural justice around the world	Ch 15, p. 660
Global assessment trends for recruitment	Ch 16, p. 685
The globe project	Ch 16, p. 697
Women on boards globally	Ch 16, p. 701
Global comparisons of gender gaps	Ch 16, p. 706

Research spotlight boxes profile Australian and New Zealand social psychology researchers.


RESEARCH SPOTLIGHT

ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR FIONA KATE BARLOW, SCHOOL OF PSYCHOLOGY, UNIVERSITY OF QUEENSLAND

What are the topic areas of your research?

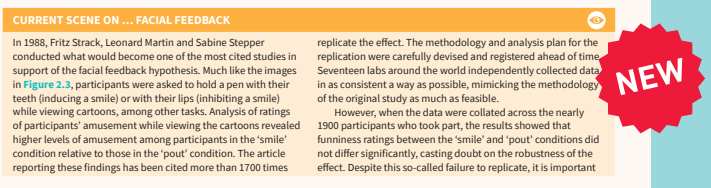
I look at contact between members of different groups and how such contact (or expectations about contact) shapes intergroup relations. I look extensively at how fears around contact (e.g., expecting rejection on the basis of race) can encourage race-based segregation, and how negative contact between members of traditionally oppositional groups can effectively poison intergroup relations. My work informs researchers about expecting rejection on the basis of your race, minority group people in Western settings) are perpetually denied their national identity. They are always being asked, 'Where are you *really* from?' and so on and so forth. Given these pressures, we proposed that under certain conditions Asian Australian participants might actually strategically befriend ethnic deviants; that is, 'white-acting' Asians and 'Asian-acting' whites (i.e., members of each group who fit stereotypes about the other group). In order to test our hypotheses we first ran a pilot study – finding out what sort of interests were stereotypically associated with both white and Asian Australians. Michael then designed fake Facebook profiles of an Asian man (William Lee) or white man (Lee Williams) who displayed either stereotypically white or Asian interests and likes. Asian and white Australians each saw one profile (random assignment to conditions). Sure enough, under certain conditions Asian Australians actually preferentially 'friended' the 'boundary

Source: © Courtesy of Associate Professor Fiona Kate Barlow

RESEARCH SPOTLIGHT BOXES

Dr Jackie Hunter, University of Otago	Ch 2, p. 81
Professor Ottmar Lipp, Curtin University	Ch 3, p. 130
Associate Professor Fiona Kate Barlow, School of Psychology, University of Queensland	Ch 4, p. 181
Professor Kerry Robinson, University of Western Sydney	Ch 5, p. 215
Dr Yoshihisa Kashima, University of Melbourne	Ch 6, p. 262
Dr Jolanda Jetten, University of Queensland	Ch 7, p. 304
Dr Dirk Van Rooy, Australian National University	Ch 8, p. 339
Dr Nickola Overall, University of Auckland	Ch 9, p. 393
Dr Arthur A. Stukas, La Trobe University	Ch 10, p. 438
Dr Thomas Denson, University of New South Wales	Ch 11, p. 488
Professor Joseph Reser, Griffith University and Durham University	Ch 12, p. 534
Dr Neville Robertson: Community Psychologist, Hamilton, Aotearoa/ New Zealand	Ch 13, p. 572
Professor Julia Rucklidge, University of Canterbury	Ch 14, p. 617
Dr Blake Mckimmie, University of Queensland	Ch 15, p. 662
Professor Paula Brough, Griffith University	Ch 16, p. 709

Critically explore social psychology research and replication failures with the **Current scene on... boxes**


CURRENT SCENE ON ... FACIAL FEEDBACK

In 1988, Fritz Strack, Leonard Martin and Sabine Stepper conducted what would become one of the most cited studies in support of the facial feedback hypothesis. Much like the images in Figure 2.3, participants were asked to hold a pen with their teeth (inducing a smile) or with their lips (inhibiting a smile) while viewing cartoons, among other tasks. Analysis of ratings of participants' amusement while viewing the cartoons revealed higher levels of amusement among participants in the 'smile' condition relative to those in the 'pout' condition. The article reporting these findings has been cited more than 1700 times

replicate the effect. The methodology and analysis plan for the replication were carefully devised and registered ahead of time. Seventeen labs around the world independently collected data in as consistent a way as possible, mimicking the methodology of the original study as much as feasible.

However, when the data were collated across the nearly 1900 participants who took part, the results showed that funniness ratings between the 'smile' and 'pout' conditions did not differ significantly, casting doubt on the robustness of the effect. Despite this so-called failure to replicate, it is important

NEW

CURRENT SCENE ON... BOXES

Facial feedback	Ch 2, p. 48
Social priming	Ch 3, p. 119
Publication bias	Ch 4, p. 164
The great outdoors	Ch 12, p. 530
Replication failures	Ch 15, p. 643

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END-OF-CHAPTER FEATURES

At the end of each chapter you will find several tools to help you to review, practise and extend your knowledge of the key learning objectives.

Revisit opening vignette in the **Topical reflection** to connect student learning of theory back to the real-world context.

Topical Reflection

SISTERGIRLS OF TIWI ISLAND

Research conducted by Damien Riggs and Kate Toon (2015) provided an insight into the experiences of Indigenous Sistergirls. Many spoke of trying to keep their identity a secret from family members for fear of rejection, which was balanced with relief and joy when their disclosure met with acceptance. Others reflected the pain of rejection from family members and the violence or threats of violence they experienced, particularly from their fathers, but also extended family and friends. The long-term emotional consequences of such experiences often led to depression, homelessness, drugs and alcohol abuse – some even turned to sex work or sex for favours, such as a bed for the night.

Many highlighted the complexities of often rigidly defined feminine roles within Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and the effect this had in terms of affirming their

Review your understanding of the key chapter topics with the **Summary**.

SUMMARY

DEFINING SEX, INTERSEX, GENDER, AND SEXUAL ORIENTATION

- The terms sex and gender are often used interchangeably, but there are distinct differences between them.

BIOLOGICAL SEX

- Biological sex is a label assigned at birth (or by ultrasound or other prenatal test before birth) based on medical factors such as genitals and chromosomes.

GENDER

- The attitudes, feelings and behaviours that we associate with a person's biological sex.

SEXUAL ORIENTATION

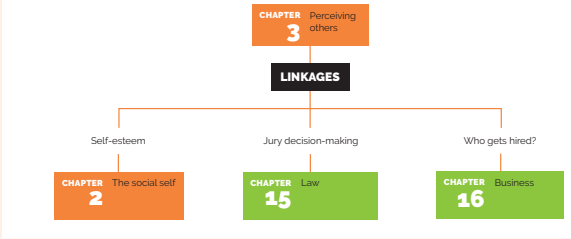
- Sexual orientation describes a person's enduring physical, romantic and emotional preference and attraction to another person.
- A sexual self-concept is informed by aspects of our sexuality

Linkages diagrams present a set of questions that illustrate and help you understand the network of relationships among social psychology concepts in different chapters.

LINKAGES

The research reviewed in this chapter reveals the dynamic processes that drive how we perceive others. From the information we gather, to the attributions we make, to inferring others', personality, we appear to both get it right and get it wrong. Recall that some of the biases in attribution that emerge are grounded in the desire for high self-esteem (as outlined in Chapter 2, 'The social self'). The 'Linkages' diagram also shows ties to two other chapters in which we see how the perceptions we have of others has far-reaching consequences – in the legal domain and in the business domain.

NEW



Test your knowledge and consolidate your learning through the **Revision quiz**. With answers at the end of the book.

REVIEW QUIZ

1 Which of the following is *not* considered a major source of information in the processes of perceiving others?
a Situations.
b Behaviours.
c Physical appearance.
d Heuristics.

2 Which of the following stem from Kelley's covariation theory?
a Choice, expectedness and effects.
b Consensus, distinctiveness and consistency.
c Availability, choice and consistency.
d Personal attribution, situational attribution and behavioural attribution.

4 Which term refers to the phenomenon whereby individuals interpret ambiguous information as supporting their prior beliefs?
a Belief perseverance.
b False consensus.
c Confirmatory hypothesis testing.
d Base-rate fallacy.

5 Of the following pairs of traits, which has been argued to form the basis of 'central traits' of person perception?
a Warmth and competence.
b Extroversion and agreeableness.
c Confidence and humility.
d Dominance and nurturance.

Extend your understanding through the suggested **Weblinks** and **References** relevant to each chapter

WEBLINKS

Decision-making and heuristics
https://cat.xula.edu/thinker/decisions/heuristics
A demonstration of the availability heuristic as well as other heuristics used in attributions and decision-making.

TED talks on deception and lying
https://blog.ted.com/5-talks-that-are-all-about-lying/
A series of 5 TED talks on deception and lying.

System 1 and System 2
https://www.inc.com/daniel-kahneman/idea-lab-making-smarter-decisions.html
An interview featuring Daniel Kahneman discussing the System 1 and System 2 cognitive processes.

Social perception lab
http://tlab.princeton.edu/demonstrations
A demonstration site for Alex Todorov's laboratory in which you can see how traits appear on the face.

Spot the fake smile
http://www.bbc.co.uk/science/humanbody/mind/surveys/smiles/index.shtml
'Spot the fake smile' activity from the BBC.

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PREFACE

The opening years of the twenty-first century have proved to be an exciting and tumultuous time – more so, it seems, than any in recent memory. On the one hand, thanks to the rising popularity of Facebook, Twitter, Skype, Instagram and other social media, all of which are available on mobile apps, wherever we are, it has never been easier to be 'social' – to talk to others or share opinions, pictures, music and footage of live events as they occur with people from every corner of the world. On the other hand, deep social and political divisions, religious and ethnic conflicts all over the world, economic turmoil and an ever-present threat of terrorism surround us.

Encircled by its place in science and by current world events, social psychology – its theories, research methods and basic findings – has never been more relevant or more important. We used to think of social psychology as a discipline that is slow to change. It was thought that, as in other sciences, knowledge builds in small increments, one brick at a time. Social psychology has no 'critical' experiments, no single study can 'prove' a theory, and no single theory can fully explain the complexities of human social behaviour. While all this remains true, the process of revising this textbook always seems to shows us how complex, dynamic and responsive our field can be. As the world around us rapidly changes, so too does social psychology. Whether the topic is world news, politics, business, health, education, law, travel, sport or entertainment, social psychology has weighed in.

Despite the promise that it has fulfilled and brings to the future, social psychology recently has been rocked by scandal and controversy. Three events in particular have weighed on the field. First, in 2011, a social psychologist in the Netherlands was found to have falsified data that were published in some fifty articles. That case was followed by two other instances of fraud and a paper that survived peer review at a leading journal in the field, the *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, purporting to prove extrasensory perception (ESP). Second, after an exhaustive multiyear effort to replicate 100 published studies, a group of social psychologists reported in *Science*, in 2015, that more than half of the findings they sought to replicate failed when retested. This finding was heavily reported in the news media, as seen in *The New York Times* article, 'Many Psychology Findings Not as Strong as Claimed, Study Says'. Third, a 'political' controversy has erupted over the question of whether social psychology research is inherently biased by a liberal ideology. This debate, in terms of how ideology can influence what researchers choose to study and how they interpret the results, continues unabated as we revise this book.

It is clear that social psychology is undergoing a process of self-examination. This has led the field to adopt new, more rigorous methods, statistical practices, and safeguards, and it has led us to raise the bar in the standards we use to decide which new findings to report. What has not changed in this reassessment is the enthusiasm with which we present classic and contemporary social psychology in each and every page of this textbook.

GOALS FOR THIS EDITION

We had four main goals for this second edition, which includes both revision and further adaptation to the Australia and New Zealand region:

1 *To present the most important and exciting perspectives in the field as a whole*. To communicate the breadth and depth of social psychology, we have consciously expanded our coverage to include not only the classics but also the most recent developments in the field – developments that capture new thinking about social neuroscience, evolutionary theory, nonconscious and implicit processes, effects of social media and technology and cultural influences.

2 *To try to vet brand new findings in an effort to ensure that the discipline we present will prove accurate over time*. No method of vetting is perfect. But as a departure from past practice, we have chosen to exclude any research presented at professional conferences or reported in the news that has not been published in a peer-reviewed journal. For articles newly published, we sought to determine if the findings were consistent with other research. We also added *Current Scene On* features that reflect the most recent research seeking to replicate classic findings in the field.

3 *For the book to serve as a good teacher outside the classroom*. While speaking the student's language, we always want to connect social psychology to current events in politics, sport, business, law, entertainment, the use of social networking sites and other life domains.

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4 *To make this book relevant to students and instructors in the Australia and New Zealand region*. From current events examples to local research, societal trends to our *Research spotlight* series, we have made every attempt to regionalise the content to Australasia and to integrate, where possible, Indigenous perspectives. It is important to be aware that social psychology has strong historical roots in the United States, so there may be some sections that seem quite focused on that region. In these cases, we urge students to make their own connections to personal, local or global experience.

WHAT IS NEW IN THIS EDITION

As in the first edition, we have tried to both capture the essence of social psychology from its inception as well as to reflect the shifts within the field and culture over time. It is our hope that the reader will feel the pulse of social psychology *today* in each and every page of this textbook.

The content

Comprehensive, up-to-date scholarship

This second edition offers a broad, balanced, mainstream look at social psychology. Thus, it includes detailed descriptions of classic studies from social psychology's historical warehouse as well as the latest research findings from Australia, New Zealand and throughout the world. In particular, we draw your attention to the following topics, which are either new to this edition or have received expanded coverage:

- The social brain and body (Chapter 1)
- Ethics and consent in online research (Chapter 1)
- Facebook as a venue for social comparison (Chapter 2)
- Social class as a cultural influence (Chapter 2)
- Attributing mind to machines (Chapter 3)
- Perceptions of moral character (Chapter 3)
- New research and discussion of dehumanisation (Chapter 4)
- A new section on gender identity (Chapter 5)
- Ethical dissonance (Chapter 6)
- Engaged followership model of obedience (Chapter 7)
- Collective intelligence: Are some groups smarter than others? (Chapter 8)
- Uses of technology to train real decision-making groups (Chapter 8)
- New research on online dating (Chapter 9)
- Mate selection and conspicuous consumption (Chapter 9)
- Neuroscience of empathy (Chapter 10)
- Social influences on helping in philanthropy (Chapter 10)
- Evolutionary psychology approaches to aggression (Chapter 11)
- Effects of genes, hormones and brain functioning on aggression (Chapter 11)
- An introduction to environmental psychology – the applied side of social psychology (Chapter 12)
- The application of social psychology in the community (Chapter 13)
- The link between obesity and stress (Chapter 14)
- Cultural differences in social support seeking (Chapter 14).
- Alibis as eyewitnesses to innocence (Chapter 15)
- Pleading guilty in the shadow of trial (Chapter 15)
- Cybervetting in personnel selection (Chapter 16)
- Cultural influences on leadership (Chapter 16).

As this non-exhaustive list shows, this second edition contains new (and newsy) material. We made particular efforts to ensure that we incorporated research published within the last five years, to ensure that the text reflects the most recent state of understanding on a given topic.

In this second edition, we have also added *Current Scene On* features, which draw attention to the most current research relating to classic studies in the field. In some cases, that recent research involves failures to replicate originally-reported findings. In others, the recent work highlights the boundary conditions under which certain findings emerge. We feel that this feature will draw students in to the state of the science, increasing appreciation of the dynamic nature of findings in the field and building confidence that the field continues in its enthusiastic efforts to establish a solid base of understanding of social processes.

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Connections with current and local events

To cover social psychology is one thing, but to *use* its principles to explain events in the real world is quite another. More than fifteen years ago, the events of 9/11 changed the world. In different ways not fully discernible, so did the global financial crisis; the election of Australia's first female prime minister, Julia Gillard; the changes that have swept through the Arab world; and the increasing ease with which people can now meet, interact, and share services – as seen in the global rise of Uber and Airbnb – through online social networking sites on mobile devices. More than ever, connecting basic theory to real life is the best way to heighten student interest.

The second edition, like its predecessor, is committed to making social psychology *relevant*. Accordingly, almost every page refers to people, places, events, social trends and issues that are prominent in contemporary culture. These references are designed to further illustrate the connectedness of social psychology to a world that extends beyond the borders of a university campus. We have also updated our *Research Spotlight* features at the end of each chapter. Each feature includes an interview with a social psychologist in Australia or New Zealand, highlighting their contributions to the topic at hand.

Gender and sexuality

In this edition we have increased our focus on gender identity. In our brand-new chapter on gender identity we explore the development of gender identity, gender roles and stereotypes, the gender binary and the diversity of gender identity. In our chapter on attraction and close relationships we take a look at sexuality, sexual orientation and same sex relationships.

Cultural perspectives

Carrying on the tradition of the first edition, this text embraces current research on cultural influences in social behaviour. Social psychologists have long been fascinated by similarity and difference among cultural groups and between racial and ethnic groups within cultures. As social psychology is a truly international discipline, this book also includes many citations to research conducted throughout North America, Europe, Asia and other parts of the world. We believe that the study of human diversity from the perspectives of researchers who themselves are a diverse lot can help students become better informed about social relations as well as about ethics and values.

In addition to discussion of cultural influences throughout the body of the text, we also highlight research addressing cultural perspectives in *Cultural Diversity* boxes. These boxes serve to highlight both the similarities and differences that exist in social psychological processes around the world and appear throughout each chapter.

Further, we undertook efforts to integrate content on Indigenous perspectives in Australia and New Zealand throughout this second edition. With the guidance of Julie Homewood, who served as advisor for this effort, we incorporated research acknowledging points of convergence and divergence as related to Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander, and Māori peoples.

Social psychology and common sense

Building on a discussion in Chapter 1 about the links (and lack thereof) between social psychology and common sense, each chapter opens with a *Putting common sense to the test* quiz – a set of true–false questions designed to assess the student's intuitive beliefs about material later contained in that chapter. The answers to these questions are revealed in a margin box after the topic is presented in the text. These answers are then explained at the end of each chapter. We think that students will find this exercise engaging. It will also enable them, as they read, to check their intuitive beliefs against the findings in the field of social psychology and to notice the discrepancies that exist.

The organisation

Of all the challenges faced by teachers and textbooks, perhaps the greatest is to put information together in a way that is both accurate and easy to understand. A strong organisational framework helps in meeting this challenge. Informing our thoughts for this edition is the view that social psychology is a dynamic discipline – one that embraces feelings, thoughts, behaviours, the contexts in which they occur across the lifespan, and the fact that each of these elements shapes and is shaped by the social environment in which we interact. Hence, we have

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taken a social ecological approach, loosely guided by the work of Urie Bronfenbrenner (1974) who suggested that in order to understand a person you must consider the entire ecological system in which they develop. Accordingly the model we have chosen emphasises multiple levels or spheres of influence emanating from:

1 the intra-individual level that considers the characteristics of the individual
2 the interpersonal networks – the people that they share their lives with and those they interact with
3 the environments in which they live, work and interact, and the systems which govern and guide them
4 the institutional patterns of culture (such as customary practices and beliefs) that help to define them and their behaviours
5 the socio-historical context in which they live.

The book opens with the history, subject matter and research methods of social psychology, which orients readers to the socio-historical context and the environment in which the discipline has evolved (Part I). We then move to an intra-individual focus on social perception (Part II), followed by a shift outward to the interpersonal networks with which a person interacts – focusing on social influence (Part III) and social relations (Part IV). We conclude with social psychology and real world applications, which embeds research and practice in social psychology into some of the environments in which it is commonly applied (Part V). Each chapter in this text talks about issues of relevance to an individual's 'as lived' experience, incorporating research that embraces the human journey with all of its uniqueness and its similarities.

We realise that some instructors like to reshuffle the deck to develop a chapter order that better fits their own approach. There is no problem in doing this. Each chapter stands on its own and does not require that others be read first.

The presentation

Even when the content of a textbook is accurate and up to date, and even when its organisation is sound, there is still the matter of presentation. As the 'teacher outside the classroom', a good textbook should facilitate learning. Thus, every chapter contains the following pedagogical features:

- An *opening vignette* that highlights aspects of material covered in the chapter, which is followed up with a *Topical Reflection* box at the end of the chapter.
- *Learning objectives* and a *Putting common sense to the test* quiz at the beginning of the chapter.
- Bar graphs, line graphs, tables, sketches, photographs and flowcharts that illustrate, extend, enhance and enliven material in the text. Some of these depict classic images and studies from social psychology's history; others are contemporary.
- *Critical thinking activities* that have been designed to get students thinking about concepts and issues of relevance to social psychology.
- *Cultural Diversity* features that highlight global and regional themes of relevance to the chapter content. These boxes serve to highlight both the similarities and differences that exist in social psychological processes around the world.
- *Current Scene On* features, which highlights trajectories of research from classic studies to recent replications.
- A *Research Spotlight* feature highlighting the research of contemporary Australian and New Zealand researchers (Chapter 2 onwards).
- A comprehensive bulleted *Summary* outlining the major sections and points.
- A *Linkage diagram* highlighting cross-connections between chapters.
- A *Review quiz* to test your understanding.
- A *Weblinks* section linking to material covered.

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Saul Kassin is Distinguished Professor of Psychology at John Jay College of Criminal Justice in New York, and Massachusetts Professor of Psychology at Williams College in Massachusetts. Born and raised in Brooklyn, New York, he received his PhD from the University of Connecticut, followed by a postdoctoral fellowship at the University of Kansas, a US Supreme Court Fellowship and a visiting professorship at Stanford University. In

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addition to authoring textbooks, he has co-authored and edited *Confessions in the Courtroom, The Psychology of Evidence and Trial Procedure, The American Jury on Trial* and *Developmental Social Psychology.* Interested in using social psychology to prevent wrongful convictions, Kassin pioneered the scientific study of false confessions, an interest that continues to this day. He is past president of the American Psychology-Law Society and recipient of its Lifetime Contribution Award, and is a Fellow of the APS and APA. He has testified as an expert witness in state, military, and federal courts and has appeared as a media consultant in documentaries and on national news programs.

Steven Fein

Steven Fein is Professor of Psychology at Williams College in Massachusetts, United States. Born and raised in Bayonne, New Jersey, he received his AB from Princeton University and PhD in social psychology from the University of Michigan. He has been teaching at Williams College since 1991, with time spent teaching at Stanford University in 1999. His edited books include *Emotion: Interdisciplinary Perspectives*, *Readings in Social Psychology: The Art and Science of Research* and *Motivated Social Perception: The Ontario Symposium*. He has served on the executive committee of the Society of Personality and Social Psychology and as the social and personality psychology representative at the APA. His research interests concern stereotyping and prejudice, suspicion and attributional processes, social influence, and self-affirmation theory.

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Hazel Rose Markus is the Davis-Brack Professor in the Behavioral Sciences at Stanford University, California, United States. She also co-directs the Research Institute of the Stanford Center for Comparative Studies in Race and Ethnicity. Before moving to Stanford in 1994, she was a professor at the University of Michigan, where she received her PhD. Her work focuses on how the self-system, including current conceptions of self and possible selves structure and lend meaning to experience. Born in England and raised in San Diego, California, she has been persistently fascinated by how nation of origin, region of the country, gender, ethnicity, race, religion and social class shape self and identity. With her colleague Shinobu Kitayama at the University of Michigan, she has pioneered the experimental study of how culture and self-influence one another. Markus was elected to the American Academy of Arts and Sciences in 1994 and is a Fellow of APS, APA and Division 8 and received the 2008 APA award for Distinguished Scientific Contribution. Some of her recent co-edited books include *Culture and Emotion: Empirical Studies of Mutual Influence*, *Engaging Cultural Differences: The Multicultural Challenge in Liberal Democracies*, *Just Schools: Pursuing Equal Education in Societies of Difference*, and *Doing Race: 21 Essays for the 21st Century* and *Clash! How to Thrive in a Multicultural World.*

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Kerry Anne McBain is a senior lecturer and the Head of Discipline in the Psychology Department at James Cook University in Queensland, Australia. She has been teaching and coordinating courses and supervising research at the undergraduate and postgraduate levels of the psychology program in Townsville, Cairns and Singapore since 2001. She is a registered psychologist who owned and operated a successful private practice for many years, working with clients across a broad spectrum of areas including sport psychology. At the centre of her development as an educator and her career within the tertiary sector is a passionate commitment to research as a vehicle to informing curriculum and the development of learning materials. Her focus on the application of research-based practice directly reflects the changing and trending nature of the global community in which we live and the cultural, social and geographic environment through which human services are delivered. Her research spans the areas of social, environmental and developmental psychology, with a specific interest in interpersonal communication and the relationships we form with people, animals and the places in which we live and interact. Kerry is an active member of the Australian Psychological Society, the Environmental and Design Research Association and the International Association of Applied Psychology.

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Lisa A. Williams is a Senior Lecturer in the School of Psychology at the University of New South Wales, Australia. She is highly active in both research and teaching. Her teaching spans all levels of undergraduate psychology and a variety of topics, from broad themes of social psychology to focused seminars on specific topics. Whether teaching small seminars or large lectures, she aims to impart a passion for the field of social psychology to her students. As an emotion researcher, her focus is on how emotions shape and are shaped by social factors and behaviours. Specifically, her research, funded by the Australian Research Council, considers the adaptive functions of social emotions such as pride and gratitude. She collaborates widely with researchers

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across Australia and New Zealand as well as overseas. She is an active member of the Society for Australasian Social Psychologists, the Society for Affective Science and the Society for Personality and Social Psychology.

Diane Sivasubramaniam

Diane Sivasubramaniam is an Associate Professor in Psychology at Swinburne University of Technology, where she teaches Social Psychology. Her PhD was awarded in 2006 by the University of New South Wales. Before moving to Swinburne University, she completed Postdoctoral Fellowships in New York at John Jay College of Criminal Justice and Barnard College, Columbia University, and was an Assistant Professor at the University of Ontario Institute of Technology (UOIT) in Canada. Diane's research applies the social psychology of procedural justice to the legal system, focusing on restorative justice, jury decision-making and interrogations. Diane is an active researcher in the psychology–law field, is a member of the Editorial Board of Law and Human Behavior and co-chaired the 2012 meeting of the American Psychology-Law Society.

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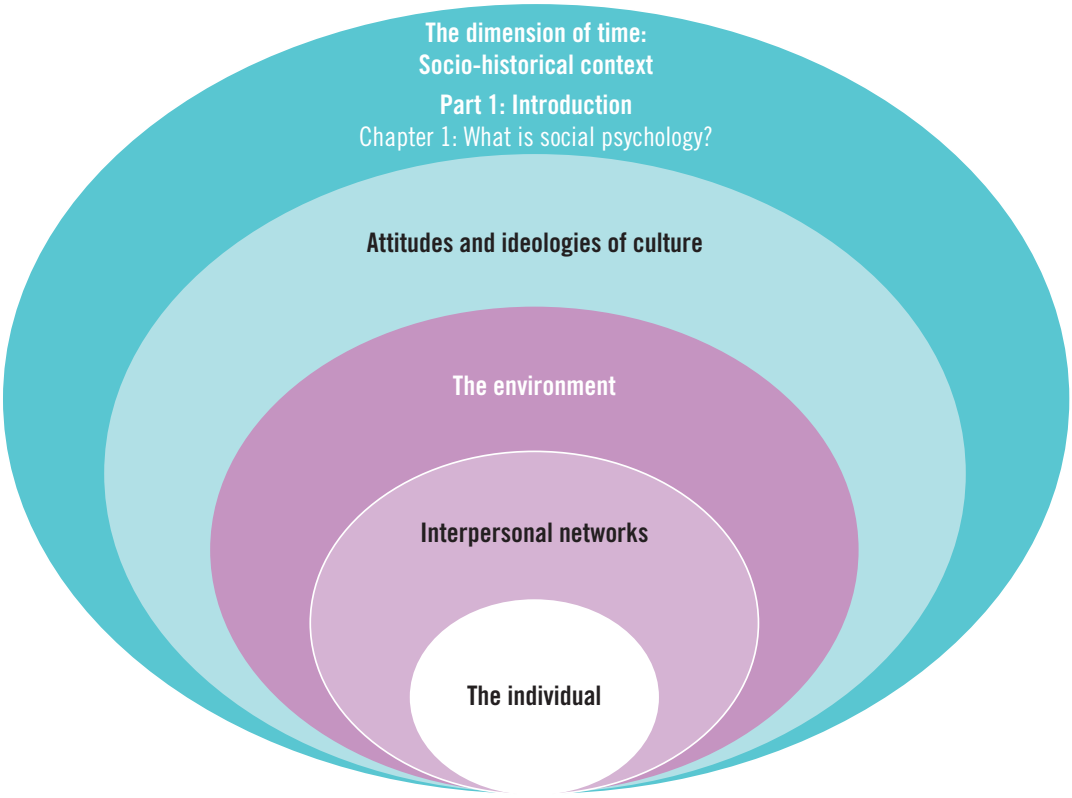
PART ONE

INTRODUCTION

CHAPTER 1: WHAT IS SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY?



In this section we introduce you to the study of social psychology. We begin by identifying how it is distinct from but related to some other areas of study, both outside and within psychology. Next, we review the history of the field and consider the important themes and perspectives propelling social psychology into a new century. But, of course, no introduction would be complete without a discussion of the way that social psychologists conduct research, so we step you through the process of developing, refining and testing ideas. Finally, we turn our attention to some important questions about ethics and values in social psychology.

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CHAPTER 1

What is social psychology?

Learning Objectives

By the end of this chapter, you should be able to:

1. define social psychology, identify the kinds of questions that social psychologists try to answer, and differentiate social psychology from other related fields
2. describe the trajectory of the field of social psychology from the 1880s to the end of the twentieth century and identify key areas that are trending in social psychology in current times
3. explain the use of research methods in the field of social psychology
4. describe the process of generating research ideas in social psychology, searching the relevant literature and developing hypotheses
5. explain how social psychologists go about conceptualising, operationalising and measuring variables
6. compare and contrast the process for testing ideas for the different research approaches adopted by social psychologists
7. discuss the function of ethics in social psychological research, including the use of deception and confederates and scientific integrity.

Source: Fairfax Syndication/Rohan Thomson

Looking back and moving forward

How many times in the last 24 hours have you stopped to wonder why a person reacted to a situation the way they did, or considered your own reactions in an attempt to understand your thoughts, feelings and behaviours? Ask the people around you the same questions and you will see a common trend. As social beings living in a social world, we cannot escape the complexities of our interactions with others or, sometimes, our isolation from them. The history of social psychology is paved with questions regarding social behaviours, with questions and ideas from inquiring minds just like yours providing the paving stones. Hundreds of thousands of studies and experiments have formed the cement that holds the pavers together, and the questions that those studies have generated have provided the complexity in the direction of the paths they have created. Not only will you learn interesting and relevant details of research findings throughout the book, but you also will learn *how* social psychologists have discovered this evidence. It is an exciting process and one that we are enthusiastic about sharing with you.

The purpose of this first chapter is to provide you with a broad overview of the field of social psychology and to introduce you to some of the methodologies we use to carry out scientific investigations in this field. By the time you finish the chapter, you should be ready and, we hope, eager for what lies ahead.

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INTRODUCTION

WE ARE CERTAINLY NOT ONE OF THE LARGEST ANIMALS. But compared to the rest of the animal world, the size of the human brain relative to the size of the human body is massive. Why is this? The most obvious explanation is that we are smarter, and that we have mastered our environments to a degree no other animal has. But recent evidence suggests that the relatively huge size of the human brain, and particularly of the neocortex at its outermost layer, may be due to something more specific and rather surprising – we have such large brains in order to socialise (Dunbar, 2014; Noonan, Mars, Sallet, Dunbar, & Fellows, 2018).

The remarkable success of the human species can be traced to humans having the ability to work together in groups, to infer others' intentions and to coordinate with extended networks of people. The human brain needed to be able to handle the incredibly complex challenges associated with these tasks. Long ago Aristotle famously observed, 'Man is by nature a social animal'; but even Aristotle could not have imagined the degree to which that is true, that the social nature of humans seems to be written into our very DNA. Indeed, recent studies of brain activity have found that when the brain is at rest, not engaging in any active task, its default pattern of activity seems to involve social thinking, such as thinking about other people's thoughts and goals (Spunt, Meyer, & Lieberman, 2015).

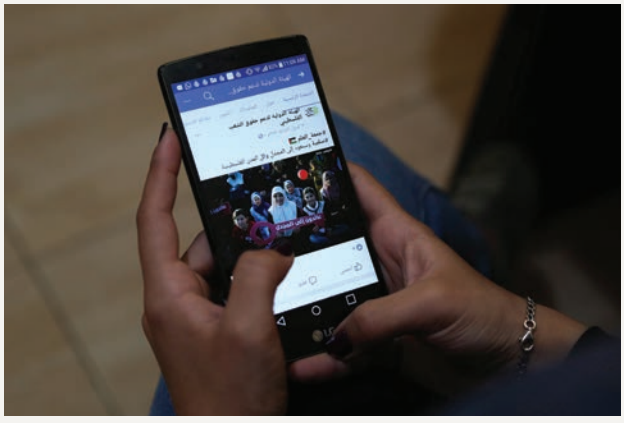
The social nature of the human animal is what this book and the field of social psychology is all about. The ways in which humans are social animals are countless and can be obvious or incredibly subtle. We work, play and live together. We hurt and help each other. We define happiness and success for each other. We forge our individual identities not alone but in the context of other people. We visit family, make friends, have parties, build networks, go on dates, pledge an enduring commitment, decide to have children. We watch others, speculate about them and predict who will wind up with whom, whether in real life or in popular culture as we keep up with the Kardashians or watch The Bachelorette. Many of us text or tweet each other about what we are up to, or spend lots of time on social networking sites, interacting with countless peers from around the world, adding hundreds or even thousands of 'friends' to our social networks. Our moods can fluctuate with the number of virtual friends who 'like' our latest posted photo. Even being ignored by a stranger we do not really care about can be as painful as the experience of real physical pain (Eisenberger, 2015).

Precisely because we need and care so much about social interactions and relationships, the social contexts in which we find ourselves can influence us profoundly. You can find many examples of this kind of influence in your own life. Have you ever laughed at a joke you did not understand just because those around you were laughing? Do you present yourself in one way with one group of people and in quite a different way with another group? The power of the situation can also be much subtler and yet more powerful than in these examples, such as when another's unspoken expectations of you cause you to become a different person.

The relevance of social psychology is evident in everyday life, such as when two people become attracted to each other or when a group coordinates its efforts on a project. Dramatic events can heighten its significance even more, as is evident in people's behaviour during and after natural disasters or war. In these traumatic times a spotlight shines on how people help or exploit each other, and some of the worst and best that human relations have to offer can be seen. These events invariably call attention to the kinds of questions that social psychologists study – questions about hatred and violence, about intergroup conflict and suspicion, and about heroism, cooperation and the capacity for understanding across cultural, ethnic, racial, religious and geographic divides. We are reminded of the need for a better understanding of social psychological issues as we see footage of protests in the Middle East or Africa (see **Figure 1.1**) or are confronted with the reality of an all-too-violent world in our own neighbourhoods and university campuses. We also appreciate the majesty and power of social connections as we recognise the courage of a firefighter, read about the charity of a donor or see the glow of pride in the eyes of a new parent. These are all part of the fascinating landscape of social psychology – the bad and the good, the mundane and the extraordinary.

FIGURE 1.1 Social media and social protest

Egyptian youth post video to Facebook and Twitter of footage shot earlier that day of revolutionary protests in Tahrir Square during the Arab Spring of 2011. Social psychologists study, among other things, the expanding role of online social networks and technology in our lives, as well as how people deal with conflict.



Source: Reuters/Samar Abo Elouf

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This chapter introduces you to the study of social psychology and examines how social psychologists do their research. We begin by defining social psychology and identifying how it is distinct from but related to other areas of study. Next, we review the history of the field, and then look forward with a discussion of the important themes and perspectives that are propelling social psychology in the twenty-first century. Then we turn to methodology, research question development and design, and finally important questions about ethics and values in social psychology.

WHAT IS SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY?

We begin by defining social psychology and mapping out its relationship to sociology and other disciplines within the field of psychology.

Defining social psychology

Social psychology
The scientific study of how individuals think, feel and behave in a social context.

Social psychology is the scientific study of how individuals think, feel and behave in a social context. Let us look at each part of this definition.

Scientific study

There are many approaches to understanding how people think, feel and behave. We can learn about human behaviour from novels, films, history and philosophy, to name just a few possibilities. What makes social psychology different from these artistic and humanistic endeavours is that social psychology is a science. It applies the *scientific method* of systematic observation, description and measurement to the study of the human condition. How and why social psychologists do this is explained later in this chapter.

How individuals think, feel and behave

Social psychology concerns an amazingly diverse set of topics. People's private and even non-conscious beliefs and attitudes; their most passionate emotions; their heroic, cowardly or merely mundane public behaviours, all fall within the broad scope of social psychology. In this way, social psychology differs from other social sciences such as economics and political science. Research on attitudes offers a good illustration. Whereas economists and political scientists may be interested in people's economic and political attitudes, respectively, social psychologists investigate a wide variety of attitudes and contexts, such as individuals' attitudes towards particular groups of people or how their attitudes are affected by their peers or their mood. In so doing, social psychologists strive to establish general principles of attitude formation and change that apply in a variety of situations rather than exclusively to particular domains.

Note the word *individuals* in our definition of social psychology. This word points to another important way in which social psychology differs from some other social sciences. Sociology, for example, typically classifies people in terms of their nationality, race, socioeconomic class and other *group factors*. By contrast, social psychology typically focuses on the psychology of the *individual*. Even when social psychologists study groups of people, they usually emphasise the behaviour of the individual in the group context.

FIGURE 1.2 The social nature of the human animal

Our social relationships and interactions are extremely important to us. Most people seek out and are profoundly affected by other people. This social nature of the human animal is what social psychology is all about.

Source: IT Stock/Jupiter Images

Social context

Here is where the 'social' in social psychology comes into play and how social psychology is distinguished from other branches of psychology. As a whole, the discipline of psychology is an immense, sprawling enterprise – the 800-pound gorilla of the social sciences concerned with everything from the actions of neurotransmitters in the brain to the actions of music fans in a crowded club. What makes social psychology unique is its emphasis on the social nature of individuals, as highlighted in **Figure 1.2**.

However, the 'socialness' of social psychology varies. In attempting to establish general principles of human behaviour, social psychologists sometimes examine non-social factors that affect people's thoughts, emotions, motives and actions.

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For example, they may study whether hot weather causes people to behave more aggressively (Rinderu, Bushman, & Van Lange, 2018). The social element of this is the behaviour; that is, people hurting each other. In addition, social psychologists sometimes study people's thoughts or feelings about non-social things; for example, people's attitudes towards Nike products. This may be of interest to social psychologists if these attitudes are influenced by something social, such as whether the endorsement of Nike by tennis stars Maria Sharapova, Rafael Nadal and Roger Federer makes people prefer that brand. Both examples – determining whether heat causes an increase in aggression or whether tennis stars cause an increase in sales of Nike shoes – are *social* psychological pursuits because the thoughts, feelings or behaviours either (1) *concern other people* or (2) *are influenced by other people*.

The 'social context' referred to in the definition of social psychology does not have to be real or present. Even the implied or imagined presence of others can have important effects on individuals (Allport, 1985). For example, if people imagine receiving positive or negative reactions from others, their self-esteem can be affected substantially (Libby, Valenti, Pfent, & Eibach, 2011; Smart Richman & Leary, 2009). If students imagine having contact with a stranger from another country, their attitudes towards people from that country and their experiences visiting that country can become more positive (Vezzali, Crisp, Stathi, & Giovannini, 2015). And if university students imagine living a day in the life of a professor, they are then likely to perform better on an analytic test (Galinsky, Wang, & Ku, 2008)!

Social psychological questions and applications

For those of us fascinated by social behaviour, social psychology is a dream come true. Just look at **Table 1.1** and consider a small sample of the questions you will explore in this textbook. As you can see, the social nature of the human animal is what social psychology is all about. Learning about social psychology is learning about ourselves and our social worlds. And because social psychology is scientific rather than anecdotal, it provides insights that would be impossible to gain through intuition or experience alone.

TABLE 1.1 Examples of social psychological questions

Social perception What affects the way we perceive ourselves and others?	• Why do people sometimes sabotage their own performance, making it more likely that they will fail? (Chapter 2) • How do we form impressions of others – sometimes in the blink of an eye? (Chapter 3) • Where do stereotypes come from, and why are they so resistant to change? (Chapter 4) • What is the nature of gender identity and how does it relate to gender roles and stereotypes? (Chapter 5)
Social influence How do we influence each other?	• Why do we often like what we suffer for? (Chapter 6) • How do salespeople sometimes trick us into buying things we never really wanted in the first place? (Chapter 7) • Why do people often perform worse in groups than they would have alone? (Chapter 8)
Social relations What causes us to like, love, help and hurt others?	• How similar or different are the sexes in what they look for in an intimate relationship? (Chapter 9) • When is a bystander more or less likely to help you in an emergency? (Chapter 10) • Does exposure to television violence or to pornography trigger aggressive behaviour? (Chapter 11)
Applying social psychology How does social psychology help us understand other domains of life?	• What can psychology contribute to the climate change debate? (Chapter 12) • How can being part of a community help in the aftermath of a disaster? (Chapter 13) • How does stress affect an individual's health, and what are the most effective ways of coping with stressful experiences? (Chapter 14) • Can interrogators really get people to confess to serious crimes they did not commit? (Chapter 15) • How can business leaders most effectively motivate their employees? (Chapter 16)

The value of social psychology's perspective on human behaviour is widely recognised. Courses in social psychology are often required or encouraged for students interested in careers in business, education, medicine, law and journalism, as well as in psychology and sociology. Although many advanced graduates with a doctorate in social psychology hold faculty appointments in universities, others work in medical centres, law firms, government agencies, the military and a variety of business settings, including investment banking, marketing, advertising, human resources, negotiating and social networking.

The number and importance of these applications continue to grow. Climate scientists and governments utilise social psychological findings to determine the best ways to assess and, sometimes, change attitudes

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and shape behaviour. Community groups and local governments draw from the knowledge gained in the social psychological study of group processes and prosocial behaviour. Judges draw from social psychological research to render landmark decisions, and lawyers depend on it to select juries and to support or refute evidence. Businesses use cross-cultural social psychological research to operate in the global marketplace, and consult research on group dynamics to foster the best conditions for their work forces. Healthcare professionals are increasingly aware of the role of social psychological factors in the prevention and treatment of disease. We consider these applied contexts further in the final five chapters of this book. Indeed, we can think of no other field of study that offers expertise that is more clearly relevant to so many different career paths.

Social psychology and related fields

Social psychology is sometimes confused with certain other fields of study. Before we go on, it is important to clarify how social psychology is distinct from these other fields, and to also show how interesting and significant questions can be addressed through interactions between them (see **Table 1.2**).

TABLE 1.2 Distinctions between social psychology and related fields: the case of research on prejudice

To see the differences between social psychology and related fields, consider each example of how researchers in each field might conduct a study of prejudice.

Field of study	Example of how a researcher in the field might study prejudice
Sociology	Measure how prejudice varies as a function of social or economic class.
Clinical psychology	Test various therapies for people with antisocial personalities who exhibit great degrees of prejudice.
Personality psychology	Develop a questionnaire to identify men who are very high or low in degree of prejudice towards women.
Cognitive psychology	Manipulate exposure to a member of some category of people and measure the thoughts and concepts that are automatically activated. (Note that a study of prejudice in this field would, by definition, be at the intersection of cognitive and social psychology.)
Social psychology	Manipulate various kinds of contact between individuals of different groups and examine the effect of these manipulations on the degree of prejudice exhibited.

Social psychology and sociology

Sociologists and social psychologists share an interest in many issues, such as violence, prejudice, cultural differences and marriage. As noted, however, sociology tends to focus on the group level, whereas social psychology tends to focus on the individual level. For example, sociologists might track a society's racial attitudes over time, whereas social psychologists might examine some of the specific factors that make individuals more or less likely to behave in a racist way towards members of a group. In addition, although there are many exceptions, social psychologists are more likely than sociologists to conduct experiments in which they manipulate some variable and determine the effects of this manipulation using precise, quantifiable measures.

Despite these differences, sociology and social psychology are clearly related. Indeed, many sociologists and social psychologists share the same training and publish in the same journals. When these two fields intersect, the result can be a more complete understanding of important issues. For example, interdisciplinary research on stereotyping and prejudice has examined the dynamic roles of both societal and immediate factors, such as how particular social systems or institutional norms and beliefs affect individuals' attitudes and behaviours (Crawford, Brandt, Inbar, Chambers, & Motyl, 2018; Koenig & Eagly, 2014; Rosenthal & Levy, 2013).

Social psychology and related areas of psychology

If you tell people not very familiar with psychology that you are taking a social psychology class, they may say things like, 'Oh, great, now you're going to start psychoanalysing me', or 'Finally, maybe you can tell me why everyone in my family is so messed up'. The assumption underlying these reactions, of course, is that you are studying clinical, or abnormal, psychology. If you base your impressions of psychology primarily on how it is portrayed in popular culture, you are likely to miss how incredibly broad and diverse the field is. Although social psychology is related to other areas of psychology, each has a very different focus.

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Clinical psychologists, for example, seek to understand and treat people with psychological difficulties or disorders. Social psychologists do not focus on disorders; rather, they focus on the more typical ways in which individuals think, feel, behave and influence each other.

Personality psychology is another area that is often confused with social psychology. However, personality psychology seeks to understand stable differences between individuals, whereas social psychology seeks to understand how social factors affect most individuals *regardless of* their different personalities. In other words, a personality psychologist may ask, 'Is this person outgoing and friendly almost all the time, in just about any setting?', while a social psychologist may ask, 'Are people in general more likely to seek out friends when they are made anxious by a situation than when they are made to feel relaxed?'

Cognitive psychologists study mental processes such as thinking, learning, remembering and reasoning. Social psychologists are often interested in these same processes, but they are concerned with these processes more specifically in a social context.

These examples show the contrast between the fields; however, social psychological theory and research often intersect with these other areas quite a bit. For example, social psychologists and clinical psychologists are working on methods to identify symptoms of depression, mental illness and mental wellbeing on social media (Guntuku, Yaden, Kern, Ungar, & Eichstaedt, 2017; Seabrook, Kern, Fulcher, & Rickard, 2018; Yaden, Eichstaedt, & Medaglia, 2018).

Personality and social psychology are especially closely linked because they complement each other so well. For example, some social psychologists examine how receiving negative feedback (a social factor) varies as a function of their self-esteem (a personality factor) (Hoplock, Stinson, Marigold, & Fisher, 2018).

Cognitive and social psychology are also closely connected, and the last few decades have seen an explosion of interest in their intersection. The study of *social cognition* is discussed in more detail later in this chapter, and it is a focus throughout this text, especially in Part 2.

Social psychology and other fields of study

Social psychologists today more than ever are conducting research that spans traditional boundaries between fields. The intersections of social psychology with disciplines such as neuroscience, biology, economics, political science, public health, environmental studies, law and medicine are increasingly important to contemporary social psychology. We discuss some of these intersections later in this chapter, but these connections also emerge throughout this book, especially in Part 5.

Social psychology and common sense

After reading about a theory or finding of social psychology, you may sometimes think, 'Of course. I knew that all along. Anyone could have told me that'. This 'knew-it-all-along' phenomenon often causes people to question how social psychology is different from common sense or traditional folk wisdom. After all, why would any of the following social psychological findings be surprising?

- Beauty and brains do not mix. Physically attractive people tend to be seen as less smart than physically unattractive people.
- People will like an activity more if you offer them a large reward for doing it, causing them to associate the activity with the positive reinforcement.
- People think that they are more distinctive than they really are. They tend to underestimate the extent to which others share the same opinions or interests.
- Playing contact sport or violent video games releases aggression and makes people less likely to vent their anger in violent ways.

Common sense may seem to explain many social psychological findings after the fact. The problem is distinguishing common-sense fact from common-sense myth; after all, for many common-sense notions, there is an equally sensible-sounding notion that says the opposite. Is it 'Birds of a feather flock together' or 'Opposites attract'? Is it 'Two heads are better than one' or 'Too many cooks spoil the broth'? Which of these contradictory notions are correct? We have no reliable way to answer such questions using common sense or intuition alone.

Social psychology, unlike common sense, uses the scientific method to put its theories to the test. How it does so is discussed in greater detail in the next chapter. But before we leave this section, one word of caution: those four 'findings' we listed previously? *They are all false*. Although there may be sensible reasons to believe each of the statements, research indicates otherwise. Therein lies another problem with relying on common sense – despite offering very compelling predictions and explanations, it is sometimes wildly

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inaccurate. And even when it is not completely wrong, common sense can be misleading in its simplicity. Often there is no simple answer to a question such as, 'Does absence make the heart grow fonder?' In reality the answer is more complex than common sense would suggest, and social psychological research reveals how such an answer depends on a variety of factors.

To emphasise these points and to encourage you to think critically about social psychological issues *before* as well as after learning about them, this textbook contains a feature called 'Putting common sense to the test'. Beginning with Chapter 2, each chapter opens with a few statements about social psychological issues that are covered in that chapter. Some of the statements are true and some are false. As you read each statement, make a prediction about whether it is true or false and think about why this is your prediction. Margin notes throughout the chapter will tell you whether the statements are true or false. We revisit these statements again in the review section at the end of each chapter, with a brief explanation to help you understand why the answer is correct. In reading the chapter, check not only whether your prediction was correct but also whether your reasons for the prediction were appropriate. If your intuition was not quite on the mark, think about what the right answer is and how the evidence supports that answer. There are few better ways of learning and remembering than through this kind of critical thinking.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY

People have probably been asking social psychological questions for as long as humans could think about each other. Certainly, early philosophers such as Plato offered keen insights into many social psychological issues. But no systematic and scientific study of social psychological issues developed until the end of the nineteenth century. The field of social psychology is therefore a relatively young one. Recent years have marked a tremendous interest in social psychology and an injection of many new scholars into the field. As social psychology is now in its second century, it is instructive to look back to see how the field today has been shaped by the people and events of its first century. Specific histories of Australian social psychology (Feather, 2009; Taft, 1989) and the Society for Australasian Social Psychologists (Innes, 2008) have been written. In this chapter, we focus broadly on the history of the field as it unfolded around the world. In each of the other chapters, we highlight a local social psychologist or researcher who handles themes of social psychology in Australia and New Zealand. Keep your eye out – you may spot academics from your university or even some of your own lecturers!

FIGURE 1.3 Social influence on sport performance

Racers from around the world compete in a stage of the Tour de France. Would these cyclists have raced faster or slower if they were racing individually against the clock rather than racing simultaneously with their competitors? More generally, how does the presence of others affect an individual's performance? The earliest social psychology experiments ever done sought to answer questions such as these.

Source: iStock.com/Razvan

1880s to 1920s: the birth and infancy of social psychology

Like most such honours, the title 'founder of social psychology' has many potential recipients, and not everyone agrees on who should prevail. Over the years, most have pointed to the American psychologist Norman Triplett, who is credited with having published the first research article in social psychology at the end of the nineteenth century (1897–1898). Triplett's work was noteworthy because after observing that cyclists tended to race faster when racing in the presence of others rather than when simply racing against a clock, he designed an experiment to study this phenomenon in a carefully controlled and precise way. This scientific approach to studying the effects of the social context on individuals' behaviour can be seen as marking the birth of social psychology.

A case can also be made for the French agricultural engineer Max Ringelmann. Ringelmann's research was conducted in the 1880s but was not published until 1913. In an interesting coincidence, Ringelmann also studied the effects of the presence of others on the performance of individuals. In contrast to Triplett, however, Ringelmann noted that individuals often performed worse on simple tasks such as tug-of-war when they performed the tasks with other people. The issues addressed by these two early researchers continue to be of vital interest, as is highlighted in **Figure 1.3** and will be seen later in Chapter 8 where group processes are discussed.

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Some scholars (Haines & Vaughan, 1979; Stroebe, 2012) suggest a handful of other possible examples of the first social psychology studies, including research that Triplett himself cited. These studies also were conducted in the 1880s and 1890s, which seems to have been a particularly fertile time for social psychology to begin to set its foundation.

Despite their place in the history of social psychology, these late-nineteenth-century studies did not truly establish social psychology as a distinct field of study. Credit for this creation goes to the writers of the first three textbooks in social psychology: the English psychologist William McDougall (1908) and two Americans, Edward Ross (1908) and Floyd Allport (1924). Allport's book, in particular, with its focus on the interaction of individuals and their social context and its emphasis on the use of experimentation and the scientific method, helped to establish social psychology as the discipline it is today. These authors announced the arrival of a new approach to the social aspects of human behaviour. Social psychology was born.

1930s to 1950s: a call to action

What one person would you guess has had the strongest influence on the field of social psychology? Various social psychologists, as well as psychologists outside of social psychology, might be mentioned in response to this question. But someone who was not a psychologist at all may have had the most dramatic impact on the field – dictator of Nazi Germany, Adolf Hitler.

Hitler's rise to power and the horrendous events that followed caused people around the world to become desperate for answers to social psychological questions about what causes violence, prejudice, genocide, conformity and obedience, and a host of other social problems and behaviours. In addition, many social psychologists living in Europe in the 1930s fled to the US and helped to establish a critical mass of social psychologists who would give shape to the rapidly maturing field. The years just before, during and soon after World War II marked an explosion of interest in social psychology.

In 1936, Gordon Allport (younger brother of Floyd, author of the 1924 textbook) and a number of other social psychologists formed the Society for the Psychological Study of Social Issues. The name of the society illustrates these psychologists' concern for making important, practical contributions to society. Also in 1936, a social psychologist named Muzafer Sherif published groundbreaking experimental research on social influence. As a youth in Turkey, Sherif had witnessed groups of Greek soldiers brutally killing his friends. After migrating to the US, Sherif drew on this experience and began to conduct research on the powerful influences that groups can exert on their individual members. Sherif's research was crucial for the development of social psychology because it demonstrated that it is possible to study complex social processes such as conformity and social influence in a rigorous, scientific manner.

Another great contributor to social psychology, Kurt Lewin, fled the Nazi onslaught in Germany and migrated to the US in the early 1930s. Lewin was a bold and creative theorist whose concepts have had lasting effects on the field (see, for example, Lewin, 1935, 1947). One of the fundamental principles of social psychology that Lewin helped establish was that behaviour is a function of the interaction between the person and the environment. This position, which later became known as the **interactionist perspective** (Blass, 1991; Snyder, 2013), emphasised the dynamic interplay of internal and external factors, and marked a sharp contrast from other major psychological paradigms during Lewin's lifetime; namely, psychoanalysis, with its emphasis on internal motives and fantasies; and behaviourism, with its focus on external rewards and punishments.

Interactionist perspective
An emphasis on how both an individual's personality and environmental characteristics influence behaviour.

Lewin also profoundly influenced the field by advocating for social psychological theories to be applied to important, practical issues. Lewin researched a number of practical issues, such as how to persuade Americans at home during the war to conserve materials to help the war effort, how to promote more economical and nutritious eating habits, and what kinds of leaders elicit the best work from group members.

Built on Lewin's legacy, applied social psychology flourishes today in areas such as advertising, business, education, environmental protection (see also **Figure 1.4**), health, law, politics, public policy, religion and sport. Throughout this text, we draw on the findings of applied social psychology to illustrate the implications of social psychological principles for our daily lives. In Part 5, five prominent areas of applied social psychology are discussed in detail, including environment and conservation, community processes, health, law and business. One of Lewin's statements can be seen as a call to action for the entire field – 'No research without action, no action without research'.

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FIGURE 1.4 Applying social psychology

What determines whether people are likely to act to conserve their environment, as these individuals have by volunteering on Clean Up Australia Day? Built on the legacy of Kurt Lewin, applied social psychology contributes to the solution of numerous social problems, including environmental degradation.

Source: AAP Images/PR Handout Image/James Morgan

During World War II, many social psychologists answered Lewin's call as they worked for their government to investigate how to protect soldiers from the propaganda of the enemy, how to persuade citizens to support the war effort, how to select officers for various positions, and other practical issues. During and after the war, social psychologists sought to understand the prejudice, aggression and conformity the war had brought to light. The 1950s saw many major contributions to the field of social psychology. For example, Gordon Allport (1954) published *The Nature of Prejudice*, a book that continues to inspire research on stereotyping and prejudice more than a half century later. Solomon Asch's (1951) demonstration of how willing people are to conform to an obviously wrong majority amazes students even today. Leon Festinger (1954, 1957) introduced two important theories that remain among the most influential theories in the field – one concerning how people try to learn about themselves by comparing themselves to other people, and one about how people's attitudes can be changed by their own behaviour. These are just a sample of a long list of landmark contributions made during the 1950s. With this remarkable burst of activity and impact, social psychology was clearly and irrevocably on the map.

1960s to mid-1970s: confidence and crisis

In spectacular fashion, Stanley Milgram's research in the early and middle 1960s linked the post-World War II era with the coming era of social revolution. Milgram's research was inspired by the destructive obedience demonstrated by Nazi officers and ordinary citizens in World War II, but it also looked ahead to the civil disobedience that was beginning to challenge institutions in many parts of the world. Milgram's experiments, which demonstrated individuals' vulnerability to the destructive commands of authority, became the most famous research in the history of social psychology. This research is discussed in detail in Chapter 7.

With its foundation firmly in place, social psychology entered a period of expansion and enthusiasm. The sheer range of its investigations was staggering. Social psychologists considered how people thought and felt about themselves and others. They studied interactions in groups and social problems, such as why people fail to help others in distress. They also examined aggression, physical attractiveness and stress. For the field as a whole, it was a time of great productivity.

Ironically, it was also a time of crisis and heated debate. Many of the strong disagreements during this period can be understood as a reaction to the dominant research method of the day – the laboratory experiment. Critics of this method asserted that certain practices were unethical, that experimenters' expectations influenced their participants' behaviour and that the theories being tested in the laboratory were historically and culturally limited (Gergen, 1973; Kelman, 1967; Rosenthal, 1976). Those who favoured laboratory experimentation, on the other hand, contended that their procedures were ethical, their results were valid and their theoretical principles were widely applicable (McGuire, 1967). For a while during this period, social psychology seemed split in two.

Mid-1970s to 1990s: an era of pluralism

Fortunately, both sides won. As we will see later in this chapter, more rigorous ethical standards for research were instituted, more stringent procedures to guard against bias were adopted and more attention was paid to possible cross-cultural differences in behaviour. Laboratory experiments continued to dominate, but often with more precise methods. However, a pluralistic approach emerged as a wider range of research techniques and questions became established.

Social cognition
The study of how people perceive, remember and interpret information about themselves and others.

Pluralism in social psychology extends far beyond its methods. There are also important variations in what aspects of human behaviour are emphasised. For example, social psychologists became more and more interested in processes relevant to cognitive psychology and adapting methods from this field. A new subfield was born called **social cognition**, the study of how we perceive, remember and interpret

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