Chapter 1

History of Social Psychology: Insights, Challenges, and Contributions to Theory and Application

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In his classic *Handbook of Social Psychology* chapter, Jones (1985) offered a particularly comprehensive account of five decades of social psychology, beginning with the late 1930s. His treatment of the contributions of Kurt Lewin, whom he rightly identified as the most important shaper of modern experimental social psychology—and the groundbreaking work of Leon Festinger, whose discrepancy reduction model (borrowed from Lewin's tension-system concept) was applied to both pressures toward uniformity within groups and consonant versus dissonant cognitions of actors—remains essential reading for aspiring researchers who want to understand what social psychologists study, how they study it, and the "middle-range" level of theorizing they find most comfortable.

Jones also offered balanced assessments of the most provocative debates that had taken place within the field and a clear-eyed account of the waxing and waning of specific research programs (which he characterized as "bandwagons" and "sinking ships"). Although we generally refrain from summarizing these debates and contributions, we do try to build upon them—not only with some updating, but also with further consideration of the challenges confronting our discipline, and the various ways in which those challenges have been met. Any history of a field of study reflects particular values and tastes. Ours include a fondness for studies that employ consequential behavioral measures and an appreciation of social psychology's potential to speak to applied

problems in the real world. In short, this chapter represents *a* history, rather than *the* history of social psychology, an account of contributions, problems, insights, and events seen through the particular interpretive lenses of its authors.

The chapter includes five sections, each of which includes various subsections:

- The first section discusses three major themes in our field's approach to research: (a) the normative power of the group, (b) the centrality of subjective meaning or interpretation, and (c) an emphasis on impactful, and often non-obvious, experimental demonstrations.
- The second section examines some historical "dialectics" in the evolution of particular topics and methods in social psychology. It focuses on influences from psychology in general, from social psychology in particular, and from real-world events and trends in U.S. society at large that have created opportunities and challenges, and on occasion crises, for our field.
- The third section discusses four foundational insights or "pillars" that constitute cumulative lessons and continue to guide contemporary analysis, research, and application: (a) "naïve realism" (i.e., the assumption of an isomorphism between what one "sees" through the prism of one's expectations, needs, and knowledge structures and objective reality) and its social implications and manifestations; (b) the importance of lay dispositionism

(i.e., the general failure to appreciate the power of situational forces and constraints in controlling social behavior); (c) the motivation or need to see oneself as consistent, rational, and moral; and (d) the impact of expectations and beliefs that bias perceptions, interpretations, and reactions, and in so doing create "self-fulfilling prophesies."

- The fourth section reviews promising new topics and new approaches to topics of continuing interest, including stereotyping and prejudice, cultural psychology, limitations of standard economic models of decision making, evolutionary psychology, implicit influences on belief and behavior, terror management theory, positive psychology, self-regulation, hedonic adaptation, close relationships, "virtual" interaction, and social cognitive neuroscience.

- The final section discusses examples of successful applications of social psychology to real-world problems and offers some thoughts on the difficulties and challenges faced by applied researchers, especially in "scaling up" small or mid-sized interventions.

CONTINUING THEMES IN CONTENT AND METHODOLOGY

Three Basic Content Areas

In discussing social psychology, lecturers and textbook authors commonly highlight three topics of central and continuing interest. One is the study of intra-group and intergroup processes (what used to be called group dynamics). This topic includes such concerns as how groups "energize" behavior and diminish personal responsibility, prompting individuals to actions they would never undertake alone; how groups produce and maintain conformity in public behavior and/or private beliefs; how groups treat in-group versus out-group members; what determines their productivity and quality of performance; and what processes govern intergroup conflict and/or cooperation. This last topic, which Lewin pioneered and for which Morton Deutsch assumed Lewin's mantle of leadership, continues to have particular relevance in this age of ethnic conflict (see Deutsch, 1977; Krauss & Deutsch, 1966; also Arrow, Mnookin, Ross, Tversky, & Wilson, 1995; Pruitt & Carnevale, 1993; Pruitt & Rubin, 1986; Ross & Ward, 1995).

A second topic that continues to play a large role in social psychology is the study of attitudes, opinions, and beliefs—how they are formed; what functions they serve for the individual or group holding them; their various conscious and non-conscious dimensions; how they cluster together; how they can be changed (and why it is often so difficult to change them); and how, when, and why, they influence (or seemingly fail to influence) overt behavior (see LaPiere, 1934). As a comprehensive and insightful overview of this topic, William McGuire's 1969 *Handbook* chapter remains a classic, but students interested in more recent reviews have many excellent sources to choose from (e.g., Albarracín & Vargas, Banaji & Heiphetz, this volume; Krosnick, Visser, & Harder, volume 2; Eagly & Chaiken, 1993; Fazio, 1990; Petty & Cacioppo, 1986).

The third topic of continuing interest, which came to dominate much of the field, is the study of social perception and self-perception. This topic includes the processes and biases that influence the assessments individual social actors make about each other and themselves (Jones, 1990; Gilbert, 1998). Today, cutting-edge work in this area is at least as much about social cognition as social perception (see Fiske & Taylor, 2008; also Epley & Waytz and Macrae, this volume), although work on visual perspective per se is making a bit of a comeback.

As Jones (1985) noted, research on group processes and influences reached a new high during the Lewin and immediate post-Lewin period, then dipped precipitously and remained at a surprising low for decades (for reviews, see both Hackman and Hogg, volume 2). Today, while there is still a relative paucity of work on groups per se, there has been a dramatic increase in research on the workings of whole cultures on the one hand and close personal relationships on the other. The overall activity index for work on attitudes has been more consistent. What has shifted over the decades has been the aspect of the topic—measurement, structure and function, association with personality and/or ideology, persuasion techniques, effects on overt behavior and vice versa, implicit versus explicit influences, etc.—producing the most activity and interest. Social perception was the slow starter (with initial work mainly on the degree and determinants of accuracy in judging traits and emotions). But interest in this area accelerated with the flourishing of attribution theory and the study of social perception processes and peaked in recent years as interest in potentially biasing influences (perceptual, cognitive, motivational, and decisional) gained prominence throughout psychology.

More examples of specific research areas included under each of these topics at different times in our history are provided later in Table 1.2, along with a listing of some prominent social trends and events that contributed to shifts in the focal research problems of our field. In addition, particular problems, topics, and paradigms have sometimes become "sinking ships" because a central question was answered to the satisfaction of researchers, because new findings made the topic less instead of more interesting, or just because no researcher came along with a new paradigm or question or an idea or insight provocative enough

to maintain the field's interest in the face of promising new topics and approaches. Yet other topics and paradigms declined for reasons that reflect shifts of emphasis in the field of psychology as a whole.

The disappearance from flagship social psychology journals of research using laboratory animals to study social phenomena is a case in point. Throughout the 1960s, there had been a steady stream of provocative articles on affiliation, imitation, empathy, and cooperation. Zajonc (1969) had explored both social facilitation and the effects of "mere exposure" on liking using a number of different species. Lawrence and Festinger (1962) had even produced a fascinating monograph on "dissonance reduction" in laboratory rats—i.e., evidence that animals that had to work hard for meager or inconsistent extrinsic rewards behaved more persistently when those rewards were withdrawn than those that had been more generously and consistently rewarded. But, for many years, the increasing cognitive ascendency throughout all of psychology discouraged most researchers from doing such work of that sort. Recently, however, there has been a resurgence of research investigating dissonance, jealousy, the operation of hierarchies, attraction and affiliation, nonverbal behavior, and other social psychological phenomena in man's near relatives (Egan, Santos, & Bloom, 2007; Gosling & Mollaghan, 2006; also, in this volume, chapters by Ambady; Epley & Waytz, and in volume 2, chapters by Fiske and Leary).

Linking the topics of group processes, attitudes, and person perception is the study of interpersonal influence—the strategies individuals employ, successfully or unsuccessfully, to induce each other to comply with various requests (which we discuss in a later section on "non-obvious" effects) and the determinants of liking and attraction. Indeed, almost all "applied" undertakings at which social psychologists have tried their hand demand attention to all three areas as well. This is certainly true of work on conflict resolution, political psychology, health psychology, industrial psychology, political psychology, environmental psychology, educational psychology, and psychology and law. In each area, both societal norms and the dynamics of small groups are highly relevant, as are the processes of persuasion and attitude change, as well as the perceptual and cognitive processes by which people evaluate each other and defer to or resist each other's influence attempts.

But the "real-world" topic linking all three areas that has received the most attention in social psychology is that of racism and other forms of stereotyping and stigmatization (including gender stereotyping and sexism)—a topic that also brings together the study of underlying perceptual, cognitive, and motivational factors (Allport, 1954b; J. Jones, 1997; Markus, 2008; Schneider, 2004). Work on this topic, reviewed later in this chapter, has increasingly involved

analysis not only of the processes by which the members of the dominant group perceive and respond to the members of the nondominant group, but also the consequences felt, and responses made, by the latter (Dovidio & Gaertner and Yzerbyt & Demoulin, volume 2).

Three Central Themes

Across these different research topics, three central "themes" in the research efforts of social psychologists can be discerned. The earliest and most obvious theme involves the power of the group as a normative influence. A second early and continuing theme—the centrality of subjective meaning or interpretation—can now be seen in almost all areas of psychology. However, it came to play a particularly important role in social psychology, wherein the classic behaviorist formulation focusing on the links between (simple physical) *stimuli* and *responses* was transformed to deal with the way (more global) *situations* shape *complex social behavior*—a shift that required attention to the particular actors' understandings or "definitions" of the situations they were confronting.

The third theme—an emphasis on "*non-obvious*" experimental demonstrations—became influential somewhat later (in the 1960s), but may be the one that most distinguishes the work of social psychologists from that of other social scientists. That is, researchers in all three content areas have frequently placed a premium on demonstrations that seemingly small manipulations could produce surprisingly big effects, or that the specification of some non-obvious or subtle "mediator" could allow us to predict when a given effect would or would not be present. Also apparent in many such demonstrations is the "situationist" perspective that has been a major feature of our field, and with that perspective the implicit suggestion that stable personal traits or dispositions matter less than lay observers assume, or at least that they can be outweighed by particular features or manipulations of the immediate situation at hand.

Later we will discuss two other possible themes that have gained increasing prominence in recent years. One involves a focus on—one might even say an obsession with—the self. Not coincidentally, conceptions of the self, and more specifically the relationship between self and others, have been a particular focus in the "bandwagon" topic of East–West cultural differences. Research on this topic has challenged our notions about the sources and nature of phenomena that we had once egocentrically, or rather ethnocentrically, assumed to be "basic" and "universal." The other increasingly prominent, and again some critics might say obsessive, theme involves the exploration of cognitive and motivational "biases" in perception, judgment, and decision

making, and, especially in the latter case, violations of specific normative standards (Luce & Raiffa, 1957). More than any other, this topic has attracted the interest of colleagues in other fields and may suggest the most obvious and direct implications for social policy and intervention.

Group Influence

The study of group influence dominated the early history of our field. Indeed, as Allport described in his seminal 1954 *Handbook* chapter, this theme was also central to our *pre*-history, before the emphasis first on empiricism and then on experimentation distinguished the first generation of true social psychologists from the "armchair" social philosophers whose observations and theories provided the departure point for early research. One might even say that it was appreciation of the fact that group influences lead individuals to behave in ways not readily explicable in terms of rational individual calculation, or the satisfaction of basic needs and drives, that provided a major impetus for a separate discipline of social psychology.

Some of the landmarks worth noting include an early recognition of the importance of explicit and implicit group norms and the relevance of reference groups, both as a source of such norms and as a basis for satisfaction or dissatisfaction with one's life circumstances. This recognition was followed by systematic theorizing and empirical investigation by Festinger, Schachter, and their collaborators on pressures to uniformity and the moderating role of group cohesiveness. Next came the development of social comparison theory, in which Festinger (1954) effectively moved the focus of analysis and research from the dynamics of the group to the perceptions, cognitions, and motivations of the individual. From there, it was but a short step to Schachter's (1959) *Psychology of Affiliation* monograph, which added affective or emotional state to the objects of social comparison and self-evaluation, and only a slightly longer step to the "cognitive" theories that left the study of social influence behind entirely and that dominated research for two decades—namely, Festinger's (1957) theory of cognitive dissonance and, to a lesser extent, Schachter and Singer's (1962) "two-factor" theory of emotion.

From that point on, while provocative work continued to be done on several aspects of group influence and group functioning, including social exchange (Thibaut & Kelley, 1959), group versus individual risk tolerance (Wallach, Kogan & Bem, 1962), social facilitation (Zajonc, 1965), "groupthink" (Janis, 1972), de-individuation (Zimbardo, 1970), jury deliberation (Hastie, Penrod, & Pennington, 1983), and other areas, the focus of the field remained largely on processes within the mind of the individual perceiver, thinker, and decision maker. At the same time,

the term "social influence" began to replace the more restrictive "group influence."

Three later exceptions focusing on collective as well as individual level variables, however, are worth noting. Two of these—intergroup relations (including the study of stigmatization of racial minorities and other outgroups) and the study of cultural influences—will be discussed at several points later in this chapter. The third topic involves estimates, judgments, and predictions by groups versus individuals—a topic with a very long history in the field, going back at least to the 1920s and 1930s (reviewed by Lorge, Fox, Davitz, and Brenner (1958)). The main message of this work, given renewed life by the publication of Surowiecki's (2004) best-selling *The Wisdom of Crowds,* involves the uncanny accuracy shown by the mean of large samples or by markets in making predictions, provided that the responses being aggregated are made independently rather than collaboratively, thus reflecting independent sources of information, and that relevant errors are random and uncorrelated.

Subjectivism

The second longstanding theme, the emphasis on subjective meaning, was sounded most emphatically, as Jones noted, in our field's resistance to behaviorist formulations that gave no place to "mentalistic" processes. Social psychologists were skeptical about the sufficiency of classical theories of learning and operant conditioning to explain complex human behavior. Indeed, even if the temptation to speculate about the subjective mental life of the rats, pigeons, and other non-sapiens so often used in the studies of conditioning and learning is wisely resisted, when it comes to *human social behavior,* most social psychologists would insist that to understand, predict, and control such behavior, one must be able to a recognize or determine what stimulus the actors are attending to, and what it means to those actors in light of their past experiences, current goals, and understandings about the world.

One also needs to know the actors' interpretation of their responses—what the actors intended to accomplish, and in some cases also how they believed those responses would be interpreted by others. Moreover, to predict the effects of more complex events like "non-reinforcement" following a history of prior reinforcement of the same action, one needs to know to what that non-reinforcement was "attributed" by the actor in question. Was it seen as reflecting a change in the state of the world or in the preferences of the agent(s) of reinforcement, a "message" that more effort or more refined responses are required, or simply a "chance" event that should not influence future responding?

For much of the history of our field, an appreciation of the importance of subjective interpretation served mainly

as an impetus to attend carefully to research participants' appraisals or construals of the events they were experiencing in the laboratory, and to make good use of post-experimental interviews and questionnaires. The main exception was in the study of emotion, where the issue of appraisal became central to theorizing (see Smith & Ellsworth, 1985). Only in more recent work on framing and priming has the focus shifted from attempts to *measure* such processes to the use of subtle techniques to *manipulate* the subjective meaning of a given "objective" situation, and in so doing to alter the way in which ordinary people respond to that situation. For example, Liberman, Samuels, and Ross (2004) gave students an opportunity to play seven rounds of a standard "Prisoner's Dilemma" game that required them to opt for "cooperation" or "defection." The relevant payoff matrix was held constant; what varied was the "name of the game" mentioned by the experimenter and attached to that matrix. When told it was the *Wall Street Game,* two-thirds of the students opted for defection on the first and subsequent rounds of the game, and one-third opted for cooperation; by contrast when they were told it was the *Community Game,* these proportions were reversed.

Attention to subjective meaning also continues to guide and sharpen our appreciation of early social psychology classics. The experimenter's explicit instructions not-withstanding, did the youngsters in Triplett's (1898) early co-action study (noted by Allport as the first real social psychology experiment) really regard their spool-winding task as noncompetitive? In the reports of Sherif Robbers' Cave studies, describing how competition between groups of preteen boys in a summer camp to win a valued prize produced intergroup hostility (Sherif & Sherif, 1953; Sherif, 1966), we are assured that the camp counselors "did nothing" to encourage the aggressive acts that took place. Similarly, in Zimbardo's (2007) account of the excesses of the "guards" in his 1971 Stanford Prison Study, we are told that the authority figures in the "prison" neither suggested nor encouraged the humiliating treatment of "prisoners." But what implicit "message," one might ask, did the participants in these studies take from the *lack* of reaction on the part of authority figures when they first began to show such behavior?

Indeed, some of the most famous studies in the history of our field prompt related questions. To what did the participants in Milgram's classic studies of destructive obedience attribute the experimenter's bland reassurances and failures to act when they asked him check on the well-being of the unfortunate "learner" (in actuality, an experimental confederate) to whom they were administering increasingly dangerous electric shocks every time he erred? To what did subjects in Asch's famous conformity studies attribute the unanimous inability of their fellow participants (again, experimental confederates) to make the simple perceptual judgments they were called upon to make; and to what did they think their own lone dissent on the critical conformity trials would be attributed by those other participants?

In any case, when Kelley (1967), in his seminal Attribution Theory opus, noted the links between Schachter's work on emotional labeling and Bem's controversial "self-perception" account of key dissonance theory findings, social psychologists jumped on the bandwagon with an enthusiasm that had not met earlier armchair philosophizing about causal inference by Heider (1958) and Ichheiser (1949). A flood of papers and chapters ensued (see Harvey, Ickes, & Kidd, 1976, 1978; Jones et al., 1972; Weiner, 1974), including Kelley's own more reader-friendly 1973 paper spelling out two basic principles—"discounting" and "covariation"—used by ordinary people seeking to understand why particular actors respond to particular objects or situations as they do. Some of this work examined the reasons people give for their "voluntary" actions and decisions (Deci, 1975; Lepper & Greene, 1978), but most of it examined the causes to which they attribute their successes and failures (Dweck, 1986, 1999; Jones et al., 1972; Weiner, 1974).

Kelley's theorizing also brought the once peripheral topic of person perception to the fore. In an earlier paper, Jones and Davis (1965) had outlined processes by which observers of overt actions make inferences about the intentions of the relevant actors—inferences that in turn allow observers to determine the degree to which particular actions reflect dispositions of the actor rather than situational demands and constraints. Kelley's papers (1967, 1973), coming at a time when cognitive psychology was beginning to assert its dominance within psychology, and Bem's articles (1965, 1967, 1972) offering a non-motivational account of key dissonance theory findings, almost immediately began to stimulate new research. Ironically, given Kelley's own emphasis on generally rational and successful attribution processes, they also motivated younger researchers to shift the main focus of attention from sensible attributional principles to attributional biases and their consequences.

Mislabeling of one's own emotions became one focus of such research. For instance, Dutton and Aron (1974) showed how a walk on a swaying suspension bridge could spur romantic interest. Furthermore, the implications of mislabeled internal states, and especially unexplained arousal or discontinuities and anomalies in mental experience, suggested fruitful areas of overlap between clinical and social psychology (Maher, 1968; Zimbardo, 1999). But the major focus of attribution research centered on inferences about one's attitudes or tastes and the factors directing and constraining one's behavior (Nisbett & Valins, 1971; Nisbett & Wilson, 1977). In particular, investigators

recognized that Bem's self-perception explanation for classic dissonance results demanded the additional assumption that actors in those studies, like observers, are making an attribution *error,* and more generally that erroneous personal and social inferences are common and consequential. Inevitably, this focus on error led social psychologists to address other shortcomings in "lay psychology" (see Ross, 1977; also Nisbett & Ross, 1980).

While the study of attributional biases, and of inferential strategies and biases more broadly, has become a distinct undertaking in social psychology, the broader insight regarding subjective construal should not be lost. Greater understanding of the processes of "construal," which is the goal of virtually all work in social perception and social cognition, is required if we are to understand, predict, and harness the "power of the situation." The need to attend to "the actor's definition of the situation" is particularly important in meeting the challenge of effective intervention—the topic to be addressed in the final section of this chapter. That is, the targets of any intervention will respond to *their* interpretations of the program and its consequences—both potential consequences and those that actually take place—rather than those of the designers, implementers, or funders of the intervention.

Non-Obviousness and Contrasting Methodological Approaches

The third theme—emphasis on "non-obviousness"—is of newer vintage, and it too has been subject to some waxing and waning. To those outside our field, such an emphasis might be regarded as an intellectually idiosyncratic preference. Contemporary physicists and chemists hardly worry about whether their theories regarding the dimensions postulated by "string theory" or the dynamics of hydrogen bonds are congruent or incongruent with everyday "lay physics" or "lay chemistry" (if for no other reason, because most people lack intuitions about those matters). Perhaps most strikingly, our closer cousins in economics feel no need to apologize when their accounts of decision making seem largely to be a refinement of commonsense principles of self-interest and their aggregated or "market" consequences. On the contrary, they are reluctant to assign a role to influences on decision making that can *not* readily be ascribed to self-interest; although, as we shall later describe, many of them have succumbed to the allure of work by psychologists on framing, reference points, loss aversion, and other such influences (Kahneman & Tversky, 1984; Tversky & Kahneman, 1974; also Gilovich, Griffin, & Kahneman, 2002).

To those of us inside the field of social psychology, however, an emphasis on non-obviousness or "surprisingness" and the research strategies prompted by that emphasis are

no mere disciplinary idiosyncrasy. It reflects our recognition that all human beings are, in a sense, already *intuitive psychologists* (Ross, 1977)—observers and interpreters of events who already know a great deal about how their fellow humans feel, think, and act, and in fact predicate their own behavior on such knowledge. Indeed, many phenomena and problems that social psychologists investigate arise from everyday failures in predicting and interpreting behavior, making the processes and biases that lead to such failures a matter of both practical and theoretical significance. Parallel failures of prediction and interpretation by practitioners and designers of intervention programs, and the factors that may lead them to "miscalibrate" the relative importance of various social and non-social influences that may determine the success of their programs, similarly become a topic of concern.

Conventional accounts of human behavior offered in "general psychology" typically reflect the conviction that behavior is determined by preceding and attending perceptions, thoughts, and feelings (the latter pair of which can be further distinguished or combined to create categories such as motives, emotions, tastes, preferences, goals, beliefs, expectations, and plans). These accounts also assign a critical role to the *consequences* of behavior, that is, positive or negative behavioral outcomes, unexpected as well as expected, that produce learning, which in turn changes expectations and shapes subsequent behavior.

One set of non-obvious findings shows that the linkages among these events are *bi*directional. Bruner and other New Look investigators showed that perceptions not only shape motives and expectations; the latter also shape the former. Similarly, Festinger and his followers showed that while behavior is dictated by existing beliefs and preferences, one's behavior can alter those beliefs and preferences, and that the relationship between richness of reward and consequences of reward can be opposite to what one might expect. A second set of non-obvious findings shows that social and/or situational context and interpretation can be even more important than most people recognize. The "ahistorical" Lewinian approach emphasized the impact of both immediate factors outside the mind and body of the actor and their contemporary meaning to the actor. Subsequent investigators proceeded to show just how powerfully determinative certain of those external influences and mechanisms of interpretation, including relatively subtle ones, can be relative to some of the influences in the standard general psychology account (immediate needs and incentives, reinforcement history, personal tastes and dispositions, even beliefs and expectations).

A taste for non-obviousness was already implicit in some early research findings on reference groups and relative

deprivation. Newcomb (1943) reported how thoroughly Bennington coeds in the 1930s had been weaned from the class-based political views of their well-to-do parents, once they were exposed to the liberal-to-radical political norms of their new peers. Readers of Stouffer et al.'s *American Soldier* volume (1949) learned that Black GIs stationed in the South were more satisfied with military life than those stationed in the North, despite social and physical conditions that objectively seemed much worse—because of how they were faring relative to the local non-soldiers of their race to whom they were comparing themselves. But social psychology's emphasis on non-obviousness was first seen clearly in studies involving "channel factors"—that is, factors that facilitate the connections (we might say "clear the pathways" or even "grease the skids") linking values and intentions to behavior consistent with those values and intentions. Here the violation of lay intuition lay not in the fact or direction of the relevant associations, but in the *magnitude* of those effects, relative to our initial intuitions (Prentice & Miller, 1992), and the real-world responses that could be influenced.

Cartwright (1949) reported that World War II bond sales doubled when, instead of relying on media appeals exhorting workers to buy bonds at banks or post offices, the government arranged for bonds to be sold in the workplace via face-to-face requests made by co-workers. Other field studies showed how heavily the friendship choices of MIT students in the "Westgate" complex depended not on shared tastes, interests, or views, but on the frequency with which physical proximity of homes and various unremarkable architectural factors such as the location of stairways and trash receptacles put people into casual everyday contact (Festinger, Schachter, & Back, 1950; see also Whyte, 1956, 1980). Indeed, one well-known and very early study (Bossard, 1932) showed that while love may depend on many unfathomable mysteries of the heart, when it comes to marriage, mere propinquity plays no small role. In that study, investigation of 5,000 marriage records revealed that one-third of marriages in Philadelphia took place between people living within five blocks of each other.

While such findings attracted great interest, it was the "demonstration experiment" that brought the pursuit of non-obviousness and the situationist tradition together to most dramatic effect. The best known of these experiments constitute our field's "crown jewels"—the experiments most often featured in our introductory texts and classroom lectures, and the ones that we describe to strangers when we want to convince them that we know a secret or two about human behavior. The object in these experiments was to show that some specific social context, subtle situational feature, or other theoretically relevant factor exerted enough influence to produce behavioral effects that seemed "too large"—or

at least large enough to cast doubt on the implicit theories held by lay observers.

The dramatic effects shown in classic bystander intervention studies by Latané and Darley (1968) and Darley and Batson (1973) are cases in point. The former showed intervention rates of 75% for Columbia undergraduates seated alone when smoke began to waft into the room in which they were completing a questionnaire but only 10% when the undergraduate was seated beside two non-intervening confederates. Indeed, when three potential interveners saw the smoke, only 38% of cases produced even *one* who sought help. The latter documented the huge effect (i.e., 10% vs. 63%) of "being late" versus "having time to spare" on the percentage of Princeton seminary students (some of whom were on their way to tape a sermon on the *Good Samaritan* parable!) who stopped to assist someone lying in a doorway in apparent need.

Studies of techniques for gaining compliance through induction of guilt, evoking of behavioral norms, taking advantage of the obligation people feel to reciprocate gifts, favors, or concessions, and similar time-tested tactics, offer many compelling examples of surprisingly large effects of small manipulations (Cialdini, 2007). In one particularly noteworthy study, Freedman and Fraser (1966) showed that the percentage of homemakers who would agree to a "big request" (to erect a large, crudely lettered "Drive Carefully" sign on their front lawn) increased from 17% to 76% when the request had been preceded by a much smaller request (that they merely place a 3-inch $\times$ 3-inch sign with a related auto safety message in a window) made by a different person, two weeks earlier. In another, Cialdini et al. (1975) showed that inducing *refusal* of a big request (to assume a continuing obligation to counsel youths at a juvenile detention center) could increase compliance with a smaller one (to serve as chaperone for one outing only) from 17% to 50%.

Bearing in mind the lessons of the subjectivist tradition should lead us to recognize that when seemingly small changes in the situation have large effects on behavior, it may be because those small changes significantly changed the *meaning* of the situation for the actor. Consider, for example, the finding that European countries requiring drivers to explicitly "opt out" of a program allowing the harvesting of their organs if they are the victim of a fatal accident recruit five to ten *times* as many potential donors as countries that require them to explicitly "opt in" to such a program (Johnson & Goldstein, 2003). Superficial consideration might lead one to attribute this difference to laziness on the part of potential donors; but further analysis would lead one to recognize that the "opt-in" procedure conveys the message that participation in the program is a matter of altruism or of indifference as to the treatment of

one's corpse, whereas the "opt-out" procedure conveys the message that participation is normative and non-participation reflects idiosyncratic rejection of a norm.

While between-condition comparisons can be compelling, the findings in the most dramatic (and controversial) demonstration experiments, such as Milgram's obedience experiments (1963; 1974), Zimbardo's 1971 Stanford Prison experiment (see Zimbardo, 2007), or even the most famous version of Asch's conformity experiments (1951), that defied lay intuition, did not involve any such comparisons. Rather, they demonstrated that particular contexts could produce actions and/or failures to act, displays of seeming cruelty, mindless conformity or obedience, or buckling to authority that most of us would not expect from "normal people." Fully appreciating the implications of these studies, and the broader lesson about the power of the types of situational variables that social psychologists explore, reduces the surprise experienced upon learning that most of the low-level perpetrators of the horrors of the Holocaust, such as concentration camp guards and bureaucratic functionaries, were ordinary people who lived unexceptional lives both before and after their infamous deeds, rather than self-selected psychopaths and sadists (Arendt, 1963; Goldhagen, 1996; Zimbardo, 2007).

The crucial point here is that even without benefit of inferential statistics, random assignment, or control groups, readers given only a single data point—that 65% of Milgram's subjects fully obeyed the experimenter's commands to administer potentially life-threatening shocks to an innocent victim, that 70% of Asch's subjects conformed to a blatantly erroneous unanimous judgment offered by their peers, or that none of the pseudo-patients in Rosenhan's (1973) classic study of psychiatric hospitals were ever recognized as "fakers"—respond to the apparent size and the surprisingness of those effects. Note that this idea of "psychological" or "intuitive" effect size, which involves an evaluation of the findings in light of prior assumptions and expectations, is very different from (and often completely independent of) any of the measures of "statistical" effect size so in vogue these days. That these statistically uninterpretable but psychologically powerful effects remain among the most widely cited in our field gives powerful evidence of the importance of these more intuitive or psychological criteria.

It should be noted that in none of the celebrated studies cited earlier did the investigators explicitly contrast the relevant findings with lay predictions.[1] Rather, in these classic studies, the power of the situation, the channel factor, the reference group, etc., was conveyed *implicitly*. Students and colleagues who were surprised upon reading the results of these studies were not explicitly invited to consider the power of the operative situational factors

relative to that of "personal moral values." Nevertheless, it clearly was the violation of their intuition that only certain "exceptional" kinds of people would obey, conform, or act brutally in the relevant situations that accounts for such surprise. The same is true for the violation of intuition that only certain kinds of people would fail to intervene in the bystander intervention studies or agree to put up a huge "Drive Carefully" sign on their lawns in the Freedman and Fraser study.

It is also worth noting that the intuitive effect size assessments that we routinely and automatically make depend crucially upon the precise procedural details and results in each study. Thus, Milgram's study is not just about "obedience" in the abstract, but obedience in a particular, carefully scripted situation. Had Milgram chosen as the learner's punishment, instead of increasingly powerful electric shocks, increasingly stringent fines (from 1 to 2 to 3 cents . . .) or worse yet, "fines" involving mere hypothetical points, it is unlikely that the studies would have been published—much less that they would remain a classic over half a century later. Nor would these studies have had such a major impact had they shown only 10% obedience, *even* if that 10% were statistically significant compared to some simple control condition.

Another implication to be drawn from the aforementioned studies is that anyone *observing* the relevant behavior—even if he or she knew the specifics of the situation confronting the actor, but especially if he or she did not, would make unwarranted dispositional inferences. In addition, anyone hearing of the behavior second-hand would be much more likely to assume that it was something about the specific actor rather than something about the specifics of the situation that accounted for that behavior (Gilovich, 1987). Indeed, there is some danger that simply reading summaries of those studies could lead readers to draw too broad a situationist lesson. That is, they might overestimate the power of conformity pressures, the degree of abandonment of responsibility in the "agentic state," or the likelihood that the role of prison guard will prompt sadistic behavior "in general," without recognizing some of the unique, and subtle, features of the situations in question that made them so potent.

As the field of social psychology evolved, a second kind of non-obvious demonstration came into prominence: studies focused on "process-relevant" measures or manipulations designed to demonstrate the critical

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[1] Milgram did report that, for one version of the study, psychiatrists failed to predict anything like the actual rates of obedience to the bitter end that he obtained; and Bierbrauer (1979) showed a similar failure on the part of research participants explicitly re-enacting the roles of "teacher" and "learner."

(usually under-appreciated) role of various underlying cognitive or motivational mediators of response. This increasing emphasis on process, and de-emphasis on "mere demonstrations" of phenomena, was reflected in a progression of research strategies. The initial strategy involved the use of internal analysis to show that phenomena and processes (for example, in group dynamics work, "pressures to uniformity") become more apparent when *measures* of the variables suggested by the relevant conceptual analysis and theory (notably, measures of group "cohesiveness") suggested that they should. After Lewin's death, the prime strategy for the inheritors of his tradition increasingly came to involve direct *manipulations* of process-relevant variables in 2×2 designs of the sort that remain a standard practice in our discipline. In these designs, the objective is to show that the phenomenon of interest is evident, or perhaps *dramatically* evident, when, but only when, the investigator's theory and conceptual analysis dictates that it should be.

In this tradition, the ultimate achievement was a research design that pitted the process of immediate interest against some other potential source of influence in a way that prompted erroneous or "opposite direction" expectations and predictions. The gasp of surprise from laypeople (and sometimes even researchers not armed with the correct theory) when the data were presented, rather than mere acceptance of the study for publication in a leading journal, became the investigators' reward. This art form reached its zenith in the Aronson and Mills (1959) study on the effect of embarrassing versus innocuous "initiations" into a group on subsequent ratings of the group and its activities, and the Festinger and Carlsmith (1959) study of the effects of receiving large versus small cash payments on internalization of the counterattitudinal views expressed by the payment recipient. Aronson and Carlsmith's (1963) study on the effects of harsh versus mild injunctions not to play with a toy on the subsequent attractiveness of that forbidden toy, Lepper, Greene, and Nisbett's (1973) study on the undermining effects of extrinsic incentives on the intrinsic interest preschool children showed in novel art materials, and other dissonance and self-perception classics were in the same tradition.

Not sufficiently noted, or tested, in the dissonance theory studies described above was an implicit "tipping point" hypothesis regarding the effects of "just enough" versus "not quite enough" force/ incentive/ justification, etc., to produce behavior change (Lepper, 1983). In addition, while dissonance researchers used elaborate manipulations, with only a few exceptions (most notably those reported by Zimbardo, 1969; also Marlowe, Frager, & Nuttall, 1965), they relied exclusively on rather mundane paper-and-pencil measures of dissonance reduction. The dissonance researchers

also showed a surprising lack of interest in the conditions under which their dependent measures, namely reported attitudes and beliefs, persisted over time and influenced subsequent behavior. These gaps in research may be one reason why there was so little applied work in this tradition, or alternatively the lack of interest in application may help account for the existence of the relevant gaps. Ironically, as we shall discuss later, researchers influenced by the hypercognitive tenets of self-perception theory made somewhat more use of behavioral measures and showed more inclination to do studies with clear applied implications.

There is another use of the 2×2 design that has become particularly prevalent in the study of cultural differences, but that was used much earlier to good effect by Stanley Schachter in his once influential 1959 monograph, *The Psychology of Affiliation.* This design "crosses" a person or status variable (like birth order, or later, SES, race, or culture of origin) with the manipulation of a theoretically relevant moderator or mediator variable (e.g., high versus low fear, or high versus low cultural salience). As in other studies using a 2×2 design, the goal of the researcher is to show that one of the two variables that are crossed "matters" only (or at least more) given one rather than the other value of the second variable in the study's design—in precisely the manner predicted by the investigator's theory and conceptual analysis.

Put differently, as the foregoing discussion implies, social psychologists have long wrestled with a fundamental issue of self-definition and self-presentation: To what extent is our field more akin to the physical sciences wherein the goal is the development of increasingly powerful general theories and abstract statements of lawful relationships, and to what extent is the task we are engaged in more akin to that of philosophers, and even dramatists, whose goal is to provide a compelling and accurate account of the behavior of people in the context of society? Even the small sample of studies we have described thus far suggests that both characterizations can sometimes apply to our field.

Consider the extreme versions of two different methodological approaches portrayed in Table 1.1, based on Lepper (2009). The first approach involves formulating, testing, and gradually refining general and abstract psychological theories, as textbook models of science describe. From this perspective, multiple conditions, explicit comparisons, random assignment, and the like are crucial; and details of procedure are considered largely secondary. This approach has generally disposed psychologists to investigate underlying cognitive, perceptual, motivational, and social processes with, especially in more recent times, a heavy reliance on analyses that focus on observed correlations between outcome measures and measures of presumed mediators (see Baron & Kenny, 1986, which now has been

Table 1.1   Contrasting Models in Social Psychology

"Textbook Model of Science"	"Empirical Parables"
• Theory-based hypothesis testing	• Phenomenon-based demonstrations
• "Deductive"	• "Inductive"
• Explicit comparisons	• Implicit comparisons
• Method and results independent	• Method and results interdependent
• Procedural details secondary	• Procedural details critical
• Statistical criteria of effect size	• Intuitive criteria of effect size
• Impartial and objective	• Persuasive and subjective
• Presenting "the findings"	• Telling "the story"

cited over 10,000 times). Unfortunately, according to some, it also has resulted in a greater premium being placed on studies that lend themselves to the confines of the laboratory, wherein self-report measures relevant to such mediators can readily be solicited, and to a decreased use of behavioral measures, especially in applied field studies (Baumeister, Vohs, & Funder, 2007; Cialdini, 2009).[2]

The second approach begins with laboratory demonstrations (or "bottling") of specific, provocative phenomena—generally phenomena with familiar real-world analogues (Abelson, Frey, & Gregg, 2004). Studies in this tradition tell a story, indeed offer a kind of "empirical parable" designed to enlighten us—to hold up a kind of mirror that allows us to recognize something about the way we, and our neighbors, respond to particular contexts or in service of particular motives. In a sense, the investigator, like a playwright, stages a plausible brief drama (in which all roles save that of "subject" are scripted), one designed to prompt us to (re)consider our current theories about some social behavior of consequence. Thus, procedural details are critical to our evaluations of the study, and method and results interdependent. Readers feel impressed and informed upon finding that their intuitions were disconfirmed by actual results. Researchers following this approach typically then proceed to test experimental variations designed to illuminate the factors most important in producing the relevant phenomenon and those determining or "moderating" its magnitude.

Of course, these two models represent extreme cases. Investigators whose concern was building and testing general theories often sought to show the world that their insights about theory allowed them to generate, and confirm, non-obvious hypotheses. This was certainly the case for the dissonance theorists (see Carlsmith, Ellsworth, & Aronson, 1976; Ellsworth, 2010). Indeed, most memorable studies in social psychology combine elements of both approaches, even studies that we remember mainly for findings that can be described in terms of simple situationist influences. Thus, although the Darley and Batson study (1973) tested three formal hypotheses about bystander intervention, it is most remembered for demonstrating that the presence or absence of "extra time" could determine whether seminarians on their way to deliver a sermon on the Good Samaritan parable would stop to help an individual in obvious need of assistance. Likewise, although the famous "Bobo doll" studies conducted by Bandura, Ross, and Ross (1963) explicitly compared the effects of different types of "models" and media on young children's inclination to follow the aggressive example set by those models, it too became famous not because of such comparisons but because of the finding that "normal" middle-class children can readily be induced to imitate such aggressive behavior themselves. Indeed, the same general argument applies to most of the well-known multiple-condition studies using "high impact" designs (Aronson & Carlsmith, 1968) and consequential behavioral measures that we have described above.[3]

In this discussion of differing approaches, it is important to bear in mind that in social psychology, theories, empirical generalizations, and even accounts of phenomena are always underspecified with regard to domain of applicability and stipulation of necessary and sufficient conditions. Accordingly, in both traditions, disconfirmed hypotheses or failed demonstrations are less informative than successes. Furthermore, the design of influential experiments involves art and skill as well as correct scientific insights

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[2] Notwithstanding the analytic advantages of such analyses, there is a potential problem of "over-claiming" that arises especially when the analyses make use of self-reports of cognitive or affective states. The limitations of such analysis in pinpointing "underlying processes" and particularly in establishing causality and should be abundantly clear in light of papers by Nisbett and Wilson (1977); Wilson and Gilbert (2008); and others on the status of the types of self-reports that these analyses necessarily rely upon (see also Spencer, Zanna, & Fong, 2005).

[3] In the interest of historical accuracy, we should also note that both Milgram and Asch—but not Zimbardo or Rosenhan—*did* run different versions of the study and/or different conditions within studies. Milgram, in fact, documented many factors (from the prestige of the setting to the physical remoteness of the "teacher" vis-a-vis the "learner") that "significantly" influenced rates of obedience; and Asch showed that whereas one variable (ease of discrimination task) mattered much less than one might imagine, another (unanimity of the confederates offering the wrong answer) was absolutely critical. But in each case it is the single one-condition effect that continues to be celebrated in our textbooks and that most importantly challenges our intuitions.

and theories; and the impact on the field of many such studies may have also reflected the investigators' ability to write persuasively and engagingly (Jordan & Zanna, 2007). We note, too, that some classic paradigms in our field, most notably both Asch's conformity studies and Milgram's obedience research (which developed when Milgram was following up on Asch's most provocative findings), produced results initially unanticipated by the investigator, who then was quick to recognize the significance of those findings, and to alter the direction of his research and theorizing accordingly.

SOCIAL HISTORY, NEW CHALLENGES, AND DIALECTICS OF SOCIAL RESEARCH

An ancient aphorism, as Ned Jones aptly noted, holds that social psychology is a field with a long past, but a short history. There are two major chapters in this story. The first, which marked the emergence more than a century ago of psychology, under the leadership of Wundt, Helmholtz, James, Hall, Cattell, Titchener, Brentano, Ebbinghaus, and others, as a distinct field of study, involved the shift from philosophical speculation and analysis to reliance upon data. The second, as Jones described at length, involved the emergence, just before and after WWII, under Lewin, Hovland, Sherif, Asch, Festinger, and others, of social psychology as a sub-discipline that relied on experiments in which investigators directly manipulated social and situational factors of theoretical relevance. Even within this more modern experimental period, however, dramatic changes have occurred within social psychology—not only in the specific theories and problems under study, but also in the goals and paradigms that serve to define our field. Indeed, on balance, twentieth century social psychology seems to have been driven as much by phenomena—both those demonstrated in the laboratory and those documented in mass media—as by theories.

Influences from Society at Large

The history and agenda of social psychology seems inextricably entwined with the history and priorities of the American society in which it was developed. Indeed, in some instances, it is possible to identify specific events (e.g., the radio broadcast of the *War of the Worlds,* the Bay of Pigs invasion of Cuba, the assassination of John Kennedy, the desegregation of schools, the murder of Kitty Genovese, or the 9/11 attacks on the United States) that have led to particular research programs. More typically, we see, in hindsight, the ways in which larger social trends or events

set the stage for an interest in particular phenomena. Table 1.2 notes a number of salient historical events and trends in American social history that we believe helped to shape the agenda of American social psychologists over the past century. Thus, World War II and the Holocaust clearly stimulated interest in ethnocentrism, aggression, propaganda, and group morale. McCarthyism gave ominous importance to the study of conformity. The civil rights movement provided the background for heightened interest in prejudice and racism, as well as social identity (Tajfel, 1974). Later, the influx of African Americans into the field helped to shift our research focus from the mind and motives of the perpetrators to the effects of racism on its targets.

The Vietnam War, arguably, was the impetus for increased interest in problems of obedience and disobedience, sunk costs, and, ultimately, minority influence (Moscovici, 1976); and the current wars in Iraq and Afghanistan and the treatment of suspected terrorists have clearly renewed that interest. Post-Vietnam trends in American social history—the inward focus of the "me" generation of the 1970s—surely played a role in our field's increasing preoccupation with the self. In turn, both the focus on the self and misgivings about that self-centeredness arguably played a key role in the emergence of "positive" psychology. Finally, it is surely no coincidence that cultural psychology in general, and research on collectivist Asian cultures in particular, came to the forefront of our field during a period when the "economic tigers" of East Asia (China, Japan, and Korea) began to roar, and immigration from those nations reached new heights.

In considering the events listed in Table 1.2, the present authors are struck by some missed opportunities to evaluate the social and societal impact of "natural experiments" wherein new technologies (television, personal computers, credit cards) came to be widely adopted in some regions or countries before others. We write this chapter at a moment when two events of historical import—the beginning of the Obama presidency and the worsening of the most difficult economic period since the Great Depression of the 1930s—are very much on the minds of most Americans, including social psychologists. What impact will these events have on what we study or on what we find when we investigate racial stereotyping and "stereotype threat" or explore "risk aversion" and "loss aversion" in economic decision making? How will our research agenda, not to mention our methods, be shaped by the increasing prominence of the Internet and various new information-sharing and social-networking technologies? Answers to these questions will help shape the social psychology of the future.

It should go without saying that Table 1.2 is replete with oversimplifications and omissions, especially omissions involving societal changes that ebb and flow, such

Table 1.2   Historical Influences on Social Psychology

Era	Context	Groups and Group Dynamics	Attitudes and Attitude Change	Social (and Self) Perception/Cognition
1930s	Great Depression Fascism	Frustration and aggression Authoritarianism: *Lewin Adorno et al.* Conformity: *Sherif*	Prejudice Attitudes vs. behaviors: *LaPiere*	Stereotyping Empathy and accuracy
1940s	World War II Holocaust	Norms and productivity: *Lewin* Relative deprivation: *Stouffer* Cooperation vs. competition: *Sherif*	Propaganda	The New Look—Perceptual biases: *Bruner et al.*
1950s	Suburbia McCarthyism Cold War Desegregation Home television	Laboratory group dynamics: *Cartwright & Zander, etc.* Conformity: *Asch* Affiliation: *Schachter* Game theory: *Luce & Raiffa, Thibaut & Kelley* Aggression: *Bandura, etc.*	Prejudice: *Allport* Communication and persuasion: *Hovland, Janis, & Kelley* Dissonance theory: *Festinger, Aronson* Balance and other consistency models: *Heider, McGuire*	Social comparison theory: *Festinger* Naïve psychology: *Heider* Construal processes: *Asch*
1960s	Civil Rights movement Vietnam War Recreational drugs Intergenerational conflict	Obedience: *Milgram* Other compliance studies Social facilitation: *Zajonc* Bystander helping: *Latané & Darley* Deindividuation: *Zimbardo*	Interactive persuasion models Learning vs. yielding: *McGuire* Interpersonal attraction: *Walster & Berscheid* Ingratiation: *Jones*	Two-factor model of emotion: *Schachter* Self-perception theory: *Bem* Correspondent inferences: *Jones* Attribution theory: *Kelley*
1970s	"Me" generation Black power Rise of feminism More women working Computers	Social loafing: *Latané* Social identity: *Tajfel* Behavioral confirmation: *Snyder* Minority influence: *Moscovici* Social influence: *Cialdini et al.*	Stereotyping: *Brewer, etc.* Mere exposure: *Zajonc* Biased assimilation: *Chapman & Chapman, Ross & Lepper, Snyder et al.* Deep vs. superficial processing: *Eagly & Chaiken, Petty & Cacioppo*	Self-perception and attribution: *Bem, Jones, Kelley* Judgmental biases and heuristics: *Kahneman & Tversky* Self-determination: *Deci, Lepper* Fundamental attribution error: *Ross* Salience, actors vs. observers: *Jones & Nisbett, Taylor* Social scripts: *Abelson* Self-efficacy: *Bandura*
1980s	Reaganism and Reaganomics Personal computers End of Cold War Breakup of USSR	Social traps, commons problem, Prisoner's Dilemma: *Dawes, Platt, etc.* Behavioral economics, ultimatum game, bargaining and negotiation Evolution of cooperation	Attitude priming: *Fazio, Higgins* Psychophysiology: *Cacioppo & Petty* Affect vs. cognition: *Zajonc* Attitude automaticity: *Zanna & Fazio* Helplessness vs. mastery orientations: *Dweck*	Decision making: *Kahneman & Tversky* Intuitive scientist: *Nisbett & Ross* Self-concepts: *Markus, Higgins* Self-affirmation: *Steele* Automaticity: *Gilbert* Social cognition: *Fiske & Taylor, Wyer & Srull*
1990s	Democratization Globalization Rise of East Asia Internet and cell phones	Cultural psychology: *Markus & Kitayama, Shweder, Nisbett* Conflict resolution Close relationships: *Aron, Clark, Duck, etc.*	Collective representations: *Moscovici* Stereotype threat: *Steele* Aversive racism: *Dovidio & Gaertner* Automatic vs. controlled processing	Priming unconscious processes: *Bargh* "Ironic" processes: *Wegner* Social illusions: *Taylor, etc.* Prospect theory: *Kahneman & Tversky*
2000s	Reality television Fundamentalism 9/11 and terrorism Iraq and Abu Ghraib Economic meltdown	Terror management theory: *Greenberg & Pyszczynski* Virtual groups and relationships: *Blascovich* Lucifer effect: *Zimbardo*	Positive psychology: *Diener, Seligman, Myers* Implicit attitudes: *Banaji & Greenwald* Dynamics of race: *Eberhardt, Markus, Richeson, Shelton*	Self theories: *Dweck* Further heuristics and biases: *Gilovich, etc.* Affective forecasting: *Wilson & Gilbert* Social neuroscience

as decreases and increases in overall economic prosperity and/or income inequality, unionization of the workforce, availability of easy credit, rises and falls in religious observance, or the popularity of particular denominations.

The most notable omission of all involves the dramatic shifts in the demographic composition of American society—not only the influx of immigrants from non-European countries, but the decline in the percentage of

traditional two-parent families and especially the increase in the number of elderly Americans and the increased period of time between retirement and death. The intent of our table is merely to provide some illustrations of the manner in which changing external events and social trends may influence the sorts of problems likely to become prominent in the field in the years to follow.

It should be noted, as well, that this table can be misleading because it generally contains entries on particular topics only when they first emerged as a major research topic. Thus, an analytic approach like Prospect Theory first came to prominence in the early 1990s, but its influence has continued to grow in the ensuing decade. Interest in non-conscious influences on thinking and perceiving was strong between the two world wars, declined in the period when psychoanalytic theory later lost its luster, but was renewed when new research methods and a general interest in sources of bias in judgment and decision making came together. Likewise, the effects of external events are not always immediate, but may appear only a decade later. Terror management theory (Greenberg, Pyszczynski, & Solomon, 1986) predates the 9/11 attacks but may have gained additional prominence as a result of those attacks.

Finally, we should note one other important class of influences not noted in Table 1.2 that have had a quite direct impact on social psychology in the United States—namely, changes in governmental policies concerning the funding of graduate education and of research grants in psychology. In the first instance, as Jones (1985) noted, the massive growth of our field (and many others) following WWII was in no small part a consequence of the provisions of the G.I. Bill that provided funding for advanced educational opportunities to veterans of that war. The fact that this bill incidentally ensured a vast overrepresentation of men with shared military experiences entering the field in the post-war period may also have had some important influences on the types of topics that were central to the field (e.g., conformity, social comparison, group productivity, attitude change) and the ones that were largely ignored (e.g., close relationships, interpersonal attraction, effects of social support) during that era. Conversely, with later universal funding of Ph.D. students, at least in most prominent psychology programs, the increasing influx of women brought the latter topics to the fore, which in turn increased the attractiveness of the field for other women.

Additionally, under some administrations, specific policy decisions concerning the eligibility of many areas of social psychology research or graduate training in social psychology for federal funding through the NIH have also had powerful and immediate effects on the types of problems and paradigms likely to achieve prominence. These effects can be positive, as in the case of recent increases in funding targeted for work in social neuroscience (and, we anticipate, work related to energy conservation and the combating of global warming). But too often the effects have been negative, as in the cases of topics like interpersonal attraction, gender studies, game theory, and many others that have at one time or another been made specifically ineligible for NIH funding. Some of these ups and downs in funding have reflected the politics and ideology of particular administrations, or a willingness to cater to particular constituencies. But in some cases the shutting off of funding was as baffling as it was ill advised. Consider for example, and with benefit of hindsight, the decision to eschew funding of work on topics like the "commons dilemma" (Hardin, 1968)—a game-theory topic that has proven to be all too relevant to our understanding of why sensible people get caught up in pyramid or "Ponzi" schemes and fail to protect themselves against the vagaries of stock market booms, bubbles, and busts.

Finally, Table 1.2 also does not include the considerable effects of the establishment of Institutional Review Boards and their accompanying regulations on research that may pose some risk of harm to participants. For example, the publication of Milgram's first obedience studies was followed quickly by the publication of ethical critiques of these studies, so that it became virtually impossible for others to replicate (or fail to replicate) these studies within the United States (Blass, 2004; Miller, 1986). For thirty years, until Burger (2009) recognized the feasibility and value of replicating only the initial stages of the Milgram paradigm (up to the point at which the "learner" first demanded to be released from the study, and beyond which the participants who continued to give the next shock rarely stopped until the maximum shock level was reached), the only further studies on this topic were conducted in countries without IRB review.

Yet, in considering the role of politics in social psychology, notwithstanding the claims of its critics, it would be wrong to characterize our field as one consistently dominated by tenets of political liberalism. While many social psychologists voiced liberal criticisms regarding past administrations' "trickle-down" economics, the conduct of war in Iraq, and the security measures taken in the name of fighting terrorism, an earlier generation willingly helped in the design of wartime propaganda (for example, the film series, *Why We Fight*) to boost the morale of soldiers and increase civilian support for the war effort, and in the development of techniques to enhance worker productivity. Indeed, if any consistent ideological strain exists in applied social psychology, it is one best characterized as a combination of reformism and pragmatism—a combination that sometimes makes for strained relationships. In particular, social psychological expertise is welcomed when we help to document need for intervention and suggest specific, theory-based, intervention strategies.

But our input is less welcome when we advocate formal experimental evaluation designs rather than the subjective impressions of participants to document program effectiveness. The contributions and challenges of intervention work will receive more extended discussion in the final section of this chapter.

Influences from Psychology in General

While sociopolitical factors have helped to shape social psychology, its concerns and methodologies have also been influenced by changes taking place in other fields of psychology. Interestingly, however, in the first decades of the modern experimental era in social psychology, it was social psychology's relative *independence* from developments in the mainstreams of the field that was most notable. While many areas of psychology became steeped in psychoanalytic theory in the 1920s and remained so well past WWII, social psychology remained largely unaffected by Freudian thought. Likewise, while general experimental psychology during those decades came under the sway of "behaviorism" and various conditioning models, social psychology did not succumb to the reductionism of Watson, Pavlov, Hull, Skinner, and company. Instead, with only a few exceptions (Lott & Lott, 1985; Staats, 1975; Staats & Staats, 1963), the field remained resolutely cognitive. Indeed, social psychology's insistence on the central role of "meaning" attached to potential stimuli, responses, reinforcers, and ultimately more complex social contexts, constitutes one of its most powerful continuing legacies.[4]

Only decades later during the cognitive revolution—as the computer metaphor for mind replaced the array of prior hydraulic models of needs, drives, and tension systems— did social psychology change substantially as a function of developments in other areas of psychology. In particular, soon after Lewinian equilibria, Festingerian pressures toward cognitive consistency, and the dynamic force-field models of Asch and Milgram had been supplanted by the more purely

cognitive analyses of Bem, Jones, Kelley, and the other self-perception and attribution theorists, the work of two Israeli psychologists, Daniel Kahneman and Amos Tversky, on "heuristics of judgment" (Kahneman & Tversky, 1972, 1973; Tversky & Kahneman, 1973, 1974) began to make its influence felt. Within a decade, their papers in the judgment and decision-making tradition were among the most frequently cited by social psychologists, and their indirect influence on the content and direction of our field was even greater than could be discerned from any citation index.

The three heuristics they proposed—which involved the inferential use of cognitive salience or "availability," similarity or "representativeness," and initial "anchors"—were not irrational or unreasonable. On the contrary, in many judgment contexts they led to accurate or at least "good enough" assessments. However, their use, especially at the cost of ignoring more normative strategies or readily accessible sources of accurate estimation, disposed users to make erroneous judgments of frequency, likelihood, and the relative contribution of causal candidates. Indeed, they can even lead us to commit striking violations of formal normative standards such as failure to give weight to probative "base-rate" information and, most dramatically, violation of the obvious logical truism that the intersection of two sets (e.g., *feminist* bank tellers) cannot be larger than one of the constituent sets (e.g., *bank tellers*). Social psychologists were quick to recognize the significance of this work for understanding biases in the attribution process and other shortcomings in the way laypeople perform other tasks of intuitive psychology such as prediction, inductive generalization, and updating of theories and beliefs (Kahneman, Slovic, & Tversky, 1982; Nisbett & Ross, 1980).

Slightly later, Kahneman and Tversky made a second major contribution by exploring the effects of non-normative influences not on inference and judgment but on decision making. Their ground-breaking papers on Prospect Theory (Kahneman & Tversky, 1979, 1984) had a profound effect on young behavioral economists. In fact, their contributions, along with those of Daniel Ariely, Robyn Dawes, Baruch Fischhoff, Robert Frank, Tom Gilovich, Dale Griffin, Chip Health, George Loewenstein, Paul Slovic, Richard Thaler, and other researchers whose work lay at the intersection of social and cognitive psychology, created an important interdisciplinary field of study (Gilovich, Griffin, & Kahneman, 2002). New work in this field, described in more detail later in this chapter, has important applied implications both for everyday decisions that people make about expenditures of time and money and for the formulation and framing of social policy—implications recognized by the awarding of the 2002 Nobel Prize in economics to Daniel Kahneman (unfortunately, too late for it to be shared with his lifelong friend and collaborator, Amos Tversky, who died in 1996).

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[4] The ambitious and highly influential work on persuasion by Carl Hovland and his Yale colleagues paid lip service to the behaviorist tradition in learning and memory. But their systematic elaboration of factors (source, content, recipient, and potential consequence of the persuasive message) actually made little use of the relevant theoretical machinery. Moreover, contemporary critics such as Solomon Asch (1952) were quick to point out that the putative *source* of a message changed the way that message was understood or "construed"—in a famous example, that "rebellion" is a very different "object of judgment," which in turn leads to a very different degree of acceptance, when the quotation advocating it is attributed to its actual source, Thomas Jefferson, than when the same quotation is falsely attributed to the Communist leader V. I. Lenin.

Contemporaneously, new approaches to social cognition (Fiske & Taylor, 1984) came into prominence. Some researchers applied the methods and measures of cognitive psychology and cognitive science (e.g., reaction time and eye tracking) to the study of social perception, social memory, and social information processing (Hastie et al., 1980; Wyer & Carlson, 1979; Wyer & Srull, 1989). Others went even farther afield to borrow various brain-imaging techniques (fMRI, ERP, etc.) from the burgeoning field of neuroscience, creating the new area of "social neuroscience" (Cacioppo et al., 2007; Cacioppo & Berntson, 1992) and the even more recent offshoot known as "social cognitive neuroscience" (both Blascovich & Mendes and Lieberman, this volume; Ochsner & Lieberman, 2001). Again, a more detailed discussion of these developments will appear later in this chapter.

Influences Within Social Psychology

Perhaps the most important influences that have shaped social psychology over the last eight decades, however, have come from within the field, as researchers confronted a changing series of challenges regarding the field's appropriate content and "mission." As both Jones (1985) and Allport (1954a) noted, the challenge in the field's *prehistory* was the lack of separate identity, with distinct theories and methods—a challenge that was met most successfully by Lewin and his students with the emergence of distinct methodologies, "middle-range" theories (most loosely adapted from field theory, with its emphasis on opposing forces and equilibrium states), and a "can-do" spirit. Moreover, social psychology has remained eclectic and interdisciplinary, taking "useful" theories and methods from wherever they could be found in a way that gave it a clear identity (see Asch, 1952). But the ensuing decades have lacked neither attacks from without *and* within the field nor soul-searching on the part of even its leaders.

However, there are also some enduring philosophical issues or polarities that have characterized intellectual inquiry over the ages and across many disciplines. Are

Table 1.3   Prominent Research Traditions in Social Psychology

Dominant Traditions	Big Issues and/or *Distinctive Characteristics*	Methodologies
Group Dynamics 1935-1950	*Practicality* *Obviousness* *Scientism*	Field experiments vs. correlations Bottling real-world phenomena Cover stories, confederates, covert measures Internal analysis to assess mediation
Yale School—Attitudes 1950-1960	Rationality of persuasion *Obviousness*	Persuasion experiments—In the lab: Captive audience, high transparency Primarily self-report attitude measures
Festinger/Schachter 1955-1970	Irrationality *Non-obviousness* *"Frivolity"* *Ethical concerns*	Complex experimental dramas in the lab 2×2 designs to assess mediation Counterintuitive predictions/findings/presentations Often opposite direction of effects
High Impact Era 1965-1975 (Milgram, Cialdini, Latané & Darley, etc.)	Good vs. evil *Ethical concerns*	Experimental dramas as above and Counterintuitive predictions—But "size," not direction, of effects at issue Often person $\times$ situation designs Pure cases of demonstration experiments
Attribution and Self-Perception Theories 1965-1990	Rationality vs. bias in inferences	Initially hypothetical paper-and-pencil manipulations and measures; concern with accuracy Later, more behavioral measures; concern with biases and applications
Social Cognition 1970-1995	*High experimental precision* *Low social relevance*	Cognitive psychology methods/concepts Reaction time/mental chronometry/imagery prototypes/multidimensional scaling, etc. Hypothesis-testing, emphasis on precise theories Explicit statistical analysis to assess mediation
Judgment and Decision Making 1975-2000	Rationality of choice and inference	Gedanken experiments with real data (some almost did not need subjects) Specific normative standards and claims
Non-conscious Processing 1990-2005	Automaticity vs. deliberative control	Non-conscious priming/framing manipulations (eliminating problems of "demand") Implicit vs. explicit attitudes—Controlled vs. automatic processing
Cultural Social Psychology 1990-2005	Universality vs. parochiality	Cross-cultural experiments Initially, exported American paradigms and main-effect findings Later, culture $\times$ manipulation designs and interaction predictions
Social Neuroscience 2000–	Localization in brain	Brain-imaging techniques—EEG, fMRI, MEG, PET and other neuroscience techniques

people generally "good" or "evil," rational or irrational, independent or communal, and so forth? Or, more reasonably, in what situations does one pole or another become most powerful? Table 1.3 lists a progression of "dominant" research traditions and suggests some of the larger issues that the content or methodology of each tradition sought or failed to address. We trust that the reader will recognize their relevance when we describe some of the shifts in research fashion and emphasis over the decades. We also trust that it will be also apparent that whenever our field becomes preoccupied with investigations focused on one "pole" or the other—for example, human "rationality" versus "irrationality" or the essential "goodness" versus "evil" of human nature—there comes a point of diminishing returns whereby the payoffs for investigators willing to explore the opposite pole become increasingly attractive. Moreover, events in the world outside academia may accelerate the speed and extent of "yin-to-yang" movements in the field that might start for other reasons (McGuire, 1973).

Likewise, whenever one set of methods or paradigms, with its various expedient compromises and choices in terms of balancing desire for control of variables against that of capturing real-world complexity and consequential responses, comes to dominate our field for a period of time, the use of alternative procedures and designs (calling for different trade-offs and compromises) gains in value, and attractiveness. And, typically, the results from such shifts in methodology, like shifts in research emphasis, include findings that raise new issues and challenge the wisdom of the day. Recognizing that any analysis of shifting research procedures and priorities necessarily entails oversimplifications, let us try to identify some of the salient "problems" (which at times have escalated to the point of crisis) that social psychology has faced over the past eight decades.

The Problem of Obviousness

Perhaps the first major "crisis" faced by social psychologists in the post-war period concerned the seeming obviousness of most experimental results. Whether discussing the early Lewinian research on group dynamics or the early efforts of Hovland and his associates investigating the determinants of attitude change, there came a time in the mid-1950s at which it was easy to parody the efforts of even the best and the brightest investigators as nothing more than proving things "we knew all along," or as some commentators uncharitably put it, documenting "Bubba-psychology," or things our grandmothers already knew (without even a "fancy college degree") to be true.

In those earliest days of experimental social psychology, one central goal of investigators was to show that they could bring important real-world problems and issues into the laboratory where they could be systematically studied and their causes investigated. These early experimentalists sought, in the terms of later commentators, to "bottle" complex phenomena they had observed in the world (e.g., the effects of democratic versus autocratic leadership, intergroup conflict, displays of racial prejudice, or successful versus unsuccessful media appeals) in a form simple enough to be amenable to experimental manipulation and systematic study. As a result, the findings of such studies were typically "scientific" demonstrations of phenomena that had already been observed and identified in the world at large.

Eventually, however, announcements that social psychologists had shown that people are generally more persuaded by communicators that they find trustworthy, expert, similar, and likable (Hovland and associates), that more cohesive groups usually have more powerful effects on their members (Lewin and colleagues), that people typically compare themselves to others who are like them (Festinger), or that White Americans hold prejudiced attitudes about non-White Americans and "foreigners," were received less enthusiastically and, with a few rare exceptions, had less of an impact on the world at large than the authors might have wished. Indeed, some researchers working in that era can recall the skeptical, if not derisive, reactions (e.g., "So, they really pay you to do that kind of research, huh?") that sometimes greeted their efforts. Such reactions proved particularly galling in cases where their listeners' wisdom sometimes seemed largely the product of what we now would call "hindsight bias," emerging only after the results in question had been described (Fischhoff, 1975, 1982).

In any discussion of obvious versus non-obvious findings, it is important to note that, notwithstanding the conventions of statistical analysis, merely rejecting the null hypothesis that a particular manipulation exerts absolutely no effect on a given outcome measure, or that particular factors are not significantly associated with particular outcomes, is rarely if ever the real goal of researchers when they report t-scores, F-ratios, correlation coefficients, and the like (Cohen, 1990). In fact, the unstated convention among most social psychologists has been to avoid using overly large sample sizes in a calculated effort to make effects of trivial magnitude reach statistical significance. Instead, the researchers generally seek to show that the manipulations or association in question also *matter* in terms of pragmatic and social significance (Abelson, 1995). One way to do this is demonstrate that a suitable manipulation and/or measure allows us to influence and/or predict some outcome

that people care about. Another is to show that particular factors or influences are more powerful and important (or in some cases less so)—either in absolute terms or relative to other factors—than recognized by lay social observers or even supposed experts.[5] As noted earlier, this latter strategy was at the heart of most of the two-condition and one-condition demonstration experiments discussed above.

The Appearance of Frivolity

After a decade of frustration trying to convince the outside world of the significance and the novelty of their research, it was hardly surprising that many investigators found themselves drawn to theories and paradigms capable of generating surprising or counterintuitive research findings. In this tradition, as noted earlier, the goal of researchers went beyond simply illustrating the larger-than-expected impact of particular factors and manipulations. The premium was on demonstrating something that not only defied the expectations of the proverbial person in the street, but that also came as a surprise to one's fellow social psychologists. For a decade and a half, beginning in the mid-1950s, this search for non-intuitive findings was refined into a high art form by the intellectual heirs of the Lewinian tradition (most notably Festinger, in his dissonance theory research, but also Schachter, Aronson, and other students in that tradition).

In each of the major "insufficient justification" paradigms (e.g., Festinger & Carlsmith, 1959; Aronson & Mills, 1959; Aronson & Carlsmith, 1963), for instance, the clear intent of the investigators, evident even in the way that they described their studies, was to convince readers that there was good reason to expect results precisely opposite in direction from those about to be reported. Whether in journal articles or in classroom presentations, readers or listeners were led to think about a study's procedures in terms of some alternative model (usually a vague version of "reinforcement theory") in a way that heightened the surprise value of the actual results obtained. Indeed, the practice of asking students in a class to predict the outcome of dissonance studies, so that their mistaken intuitions could be

made explicit (and any potential hindsight claims to the contrary made difficult) became so widespread that students' erroneous intuitions in the classroom were later cited by some in an (unsuccessful) attempt to rebut Bem's alternative, self-perception interpretation of these dissonance studies.

To some extent the fashion for counterintuitive demonstrations in the Festingerian mode waned for predictable reasons. Commonsense understandings of behavior are, on the whole, reasonably accurate, at least in terms of the "direction" of predictions if not in the calibration of effect sizes. The number of domains in which it is possible to show genuinely counterintuitive between-condition differences or correlations is limited; and the kind of training and talent required to do such studies is in short supply. Furthermore, once a number of examples of specific counterintuitive findings in a particular domain have been reported and explained, the intuitions of one's professional colleagues begin to change. What had once been deemed surprising comes to be expected, especially when more familiar examples of the principles are brought to mind. (The idea that people try to justify their bad decisions to themselves as well as others, that they particularly value things they worked hard for or sacrificed to obtain, or that they engage in other types of after-the-fact rationalizations hardly began with Leon Festinger!)

But there was another set of factors in the late 1960s and early 1970s that made studies in this tradition lose favor. Critics both within and outside of the field increasingly began to question the status of this sort of research as "serious" science. To their detractors, the dissonance researchers were seen as promoting cleverness for its own sake, at the expense of their young research participants (who were subjected to heavy deception and, in a sense, made to look foolish). When Aronson and Carlsmith concluded their 1968 *Handbook* chapter on methodology by urging readers to remember that research in social psychology "is, and ought to be, fun," their words captured exactly what the critics decried. Against the backdrop of the Vietnam War and the widespread rebellion of college

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[5] While a more complete and nuanced discussion of this issue cannot be undertaken here, it should be understood that the relative importance of statistical effect size and the specifics of the outcome measure employed, as opposed to simple rejection of the null hypothesis, obviously depends on the particulars of the research problem and mode of operationalization. Whether a manipulation of fear makes people sit a mean of 6.9 inches or 9.6 inches closer together is less important than the demonstration that fear increases the desire for closeness. By contrast, demonstrating that people are "significantly" influenced by perceived norms in a laboratory context that called for them to sign a petition about water conservation is less noteworthy, and useful, than demonstrating that a manipulation of perceived norms regarding lawn watering decreased water use in a given neighborhood by 20%—especially when the study includes evidence that additional prosocial appeals were notably less effective.

students against established hierarchy, loftier goals and greater seriousness of purpose seemed called for.[6]

It is easy, in retrospect, to defend the Festingerians and to celebrate their contributions to both theory and methodology. William McGuire's (1967) wry comment at the time (borrowed from H. L. Mencken) that the critics resembled the Puritans of old who seemed to be worried that "somewhere, somehow, someone might be enjoying himself" (p. 137) does not seem far off the mark. But the curious distaste of the dissonance researchers for application, despite their Lewinian heritage, merits some comment, especially since many of the most promising young social psychologists of the time eventually moved from mainstream research into "do-gooder" kinds of applied work—promoting energy conservation, fostering good health habits regarding food and exercise, combating prejudice, serving disadvantaged students, and trying to promote other socially desirable (to liberals) types of behavior change. The failure of Lewin's immediate intellectual descendants to apply dissonance theory, with its obvious debt to Lewinian tension-system theorizing, at a time when a crucial issue of the day—racial integration of schools and neighborhoods—constituted an immense exercise in forced compliance, and hoped-for attitude change, is especially puzzling. (Only later did several prominent Lewinians—Elliot Aronson and Phil Zimbardo, along with Morton Deutsch and Hal Gerard—turn their attention to the analysis of important social issues like school integration, social isolation, alienation, and violence.)

In any case, for young researchers committed to theory building and basic research, disenchantment with paradigms involving complex deceptions and laboratory dramas

[6]A very different questioning of the intellectual "seriousness" of the experimental tradition more generally came from Kenneth Gergen (1973), Rom Harré (1979), and other European scholars who viewed the field's limitations through the lens of deconstructionism. Many of their observations and criticisms were cogent (and consistent with our characterization of landmark social psychology experiments as empirical parables subject to interpretation, indeed changing interpretation, in light of social and scientific developments). However, this critique, as Gergen (1996) later acknowledged, ultimately, did little to change methodology or even the way in which findings are characterized. This lack of impact may be attributed in part to the failure of the methods of inquiry the critics favored to produce much in the way of new, interesting, and impactful findings. But it also may reflect the continuing, indeed ever increasing, capacity of mainstream theories and approaches to offer useful insights regarding contemporary social issues and problems and to prompt successful interventions of the sort to be described in the concluding section of this chapter.

played a role in the rapid ascendance of new theories and paradigms that required neither deception nor theatrical skills. These theories sought to explain phenomena initially considered profoundly social, motivational, and nonconscious in more exclusively individual, cognitive, and conscious terms. Perhaps most prominent was the rapid spread of interest, noted earlier, in Bem's (1965, 1967) highly "behavioristic" formulation of self-perception theory (which constituted a kind of "hostile takeover" of the dissonance theory enterprise) and in Kelley's (1967, 1972) rather abstract attribution theory. Interest in these models and related work by Jones on "correspondent inference" (Jones & Davis, 1965) and Ross (1977) on "the fundamental attribution error" eventually led to the more general exploration of errors and biases in lay psychology.

Such concerns also dovetailed with increased attention at this time to the ethics of social research and the development of Institutional Review Boards. Some researchers objected to specific research paradigms and programs in social psychology, especially Milgram's studies of obedience to authority (Baumrind, 1964; Miller, 1986; Orne & Holland, 1968; Rubin & Moore, 1971). Some objected to any research that used complex deceptions (Kelman, 1968). In the process, various other methodologies, many focused on various forms of role-playing, were championed as potential alternatives to deception research. The net result, however, was the virtual elimination of further research on obedience to authority and other ethically suspect paradigms. While such review processes are necessary, and researchers *must* take responsibility for the well-being of participants in their research, overly zealous IRBs may well have had a chilling effect on researchers who would seek to employ manipulations and measures that have real psychological stakes for the participants—one requisite first step on the rocky road from laboratory exploration to field demonstration and then to significant real-world application.

A Seeming Lack of Social Relevance

As social psychology was embracing attribution theory and beginning to explore biases in inference and judgment, experimental psychology was well into its own "cognitive revolution." With these developments in cognitive psychology came an array of new tools, methods, and measures, which quickly migrated into social psychology, culminating in the development of the broad new field of social cognition (Fiske & Taylor, 1984; Wyer & Carlson, 1979). The power of these new methods was undeniable, and social cognition became a major focus of the field. However, this emphasis on cognitive processes, and the particular research paradigms and measures employed, came at a cost. With some notable exceptions, such as the work of Bob Zajonc (1980)

on the "primacy of affect," processes involving motivation and emotion were, for some time, largely neglected. In fact, behavior itself (beyond checking points on questionnaire scales or pushing buttons) and strategies for changing behavior ceased to be a primary concern.

During this period, the research agenda of much of the field, and the findings that were winning places in our leading journals, seemed far removed from the practical applications and real-world problems that had so occupied the attention of researchers in the early days of the field. To some critics, the topics being investigated seemed too narrow and too esoteric to interest anyone besides other academic social psychologists. The fact that many of the research paradigms in common use involved paper-and-pencil assessments regarding hypothetical social stimuli and social situations, rather than consequential behavioral responses to "real" stimuli and situations, was a cause for concern. Still others worried that some of the distinctively "social" aspects of social psychology could not be addressed by paradigms adopted from cognitive psychology, whereby individual subjects sat alone in front of a computer—that such subjects were being left, as critics had earlier said of E. C. Tolman's rats, "lost in thought."

Even in areas of psychology where information-processing models seemed appropriate and of obvious applied relevance, the products of investigators' increasingly skilled labors were not bearing fruit of a sort likely to prove appetizing to those outside the field. Perhaps inevitably, the evidence-based answer to many pressing applied questions proved to be "It all depends; it's actually very complicated . . . ." For instance, while once it had seemed that the generally positive effects of communicator credibility on persuasion provided a solid building block for successful persuasion, it became increasingly apparent that the effects of even this most obvious variable depended on its interaction with a host of other variables, including perceived motives of the communicator, discrepancy of the message from the initial position of the audience, timing of the information about the communicator's credibility, the personal relevance of the issue to the audience, and so forth (Eagly & Chaiken, 1993; McGuire, 1969; Petty & Cacioppo, 1986).

Two notable exceptions to this trend were mentioned earlier and will be discussed at more length later. One, ironically, involved developments that began with attribution theory—a highly abstract theory, or rather a set of questions about which to theorize, which, to the surprise of many who initially found it formulaic and even a bit boring, later became extremely important in several applied domains. The other exception involved the meteoric rise to prominence of work on judgment and decision making, wherein the tenets of Kahneman and Tversky's Prospect Theory

soon had social psychologists writing about loss aversion, reference points, and especially "framing." Demonstrations that the attractiveness of an option or gamble depended not only on its objective features but also on its description (e.g., its "framing" in terms of prospective losses relative to one reference point rather than prospective gains with respect to another reference point) were particularly welcomed in light of the field's subjectivist tradition.

The Question of Parochialism

In 1991, during an era of unprecedented globalization and the breathtaking rise of the Asian tigers (China, Japan, and Korea), Hazel Markus and Shinobu Kitiyama published a paper that challenged the assumption that what most social psychologists in the Western world were studying was the way *people* think and act in social contexts—as opposed to the way people in the *West* think and act, and the demands and constraints of *Western* social contexts. In so doing, they not only made us more aware of the smug parochialism that characterized much of our work (a criticism voiced by Gergen, 1973, and others almost two decades earlier), they also laid out fertile terrain for new research and for reconsideration of some of the most firmly established ideas in dissonance theory, attribution theory, and the study of inference, judgment, and decision making. Their paper, which remains one of the most heavily cited in our field, came at a propitious time in another respect as well; for it coincided with and helped to prompt the rapid influx of young researchers from East Asian cultures into American universities and social psychology programs.

There had, of course, been previous efforts in "cross-cultural" research, including attempts to replicate famous findings, and to compare the behavior of people from different societies in familiar research paradigms involving conformity, obedience to authority, bystander intervention, and even dissonance reduction following free choice or forced compliance. The central distinction that Markus and Kitiyama made between independent and interdependent cultures had even been anticipated in the extensive program of research conducted by Harry Triandis on individualist versus collectivist societies (Triandis, 1968). But the specific targets of their research, especially their focus on situational versus dispositional attribution and their challenge to the notion that dispositionism was a property of basic cognitive, perceptual, and motivational processes—and the idea that the "fundamental" attribution error was not all that fundamental—could not be ignored once the research evidence began to mount.

The Issue of Negativity

One of the more heartening developments over the past decade or so has been the emergence of an empirical

subdiscipline that has been labeled "positive psychology" (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). While, as is the case with most such "new" developments, one can cite many antecedents—from the humanistic psychology of Abraham Maslow and others to B. F. Skinner's controversial fictional 1948 account of a behaviorist utopia in *Walden Two*—this development has been dramatic. The emergence of positive psychology was to some extent a natural reaction to the endless stream of distressing developments outside psychology that were discussed earlier. It was also a reaction not only to demonstrations of negative behaviors in some of the demonstration classics that we noted earlier, but to the drumbeat of findings regarding biases and failings of rationality in judgment and decision making, to say nothing of the continuing focus on laboratory and real-world studies of racism, sexism, justifications of inequality, and the like.

Finally, it may be that empirically trained psychologists tired of the stream of hard-cover and paperback books in the "Human Potential" movement that, despite their lack of intellectual or scientific rigor, and generally despite the complete absence of data, outsold even the most influential works in mainstream social psychology. Certainly, the singular efforts of a few individuals (most notably Martin Seligman) who persuaded younger colleagues to focus their work on happiness, creativity, altruism, morality, and other ennobling topics, and secured funding for empirical research and conferences, provided a vital catalyst. In any case, this area, discussed in more detail later in this chapter, has clearly been a "bandwagon" not only in terms of journal publications but also as a source of books (Gilbert, 2006; Haidt, 2006; Keltner, 2009; Lyubomirsky, 2007) combining solid empirical work with lively real-world observations in a way that has attracted popular interest.

FOUR INSIGHTS UNDERLYING RESEARCH AND APPLICATION

There are four hard-won insights about human perception, thinking, motivation, and behavior that we believe represent important, indeed foundational, contributions of social psychology. These involve (1) the existence and implications of the epistemic stance of "naïve realism" or the assumption of isomorphism between subjective experience and objective reality; (2) the existence and implications of "lay dispositionism," or more generally, the tendency of social actors and observers to attribute actions and outcomes to the attributes of the actor (or entity that is moving or changing) rather than the field of forces influencing the relevant actor or entity; (3) the existence and implications of social actors' inclination to see their own beliefs, assessments,

sentiments, and actions as coherent and consistent with a positive view of the self; and (4) the impact of expectations and beliefs on social outcomes—in particular, the role of confirmation biases and self-fulfilling prophesies.

Each insight on this short list has, of course, prompted a great deal of provocative research and theorizing. But our choices also reflect our judgments about the particular value of these insights in analyzing and addressing contemporary social issues and problems. Colleagues with different tastes, priorities, and backgrounds might well offer a somewhat different list—one that included, for instance, appreciation of the extent to which the ways that people feel, think, and act have been shaped by evolutionary processes, the importance of non-conscious processes, or the "primacy" of affect (or motivational goals). We would have no quarrel with such inclusions. Indeed, in our later review of important recent contributions to theory and research, we will discuss each of these insights.

Naïve Realism and Its Consequences

Individuals' understandings of their everyday interactions with each other, and of their experiences with objects and events, inevitably begins with their tacit assumption of isomorphism between their subjective perceptions—and even their judgments, inferences, and affective reactions—and some objective reality. Although typically unexamined and underappreciated, such *naïve realism* seems fundamental and universal—almost certainly a product of very basic sensory and cognitive processes (Griffin & Ross, 1991).

Any introductory philosophy class will inevitably challenge students to appreciate the extent to which their knowledge of the objective world is at best indirect and mediated, that perceived properties of objects are products of the interaction between mind and matter—and that, as Einstein noted, "reality" as we experience it through our particular sensory system is, in an important sense, an "illusion." Indeed, any college physics class will oblige students to think about matter, energy, space, and even the passage of time in ways that challenge ordinary experience, to say nothing of theories at the cutting edge of modern physics (such as the aforementioned "string theory," which postulates many dimensions beyond the standard four of a Newtonian or Einsteinian world) that utterly defy such experience. But neither classroom lessons nor mathematics (nor electron microscopes, fMRI magnets, or other scientific instruments) change our *subjective* experience of reality. Nor do they prevent us from continuing to assume that the perceptions guiding our everyday actions are essentially faithful reflections of reality.

Such an assumption of isomorphism no doubt is highly functional in helping us navigate through the physical

world. When it comes to social dealings, however, there is a cost to that assumption—one of obvious concern to social psychologists. In analyzing and interpreting the words and deeds of their peers, even the most skilled "intuitive psychologists" fail to appreciate the extent to which they, no less than their peers, see actions, events, and even facts through the lenses of their own experience, the received wisdom of their group, and the often-distorting influence of their personal needs, hopes, and fears. The early classic study by Hastorf and Cantril (1954), on the differing perceptions of Dartmouth and Princeton students watching the same football game through the prisms of their rival partisanships, reflected a radical view of the "constructive" nature of perception that anticipated later discussions of naïve realism. So did the following, very modern sounding, quote from Ichheiser (1949):

> We tend to resolve our perplexity arising out of the experience that other people see the world differently than we see it ourselves by declaring that those others, in consequence of some basic intellectual and moral defect are unable to see things "as they really are" and to react to them in a "normal way." We thus imply of course that things are in fact as we see them, and that **our** ways are the **normal** ways. (p. 39, emphasis added)

Likewise, the following even older, but no less penetrating quote from Ben Franklin (1787, quoted in Copeland, Lamm, & McKenna, 1999):

> Most men, indeed, as well as most sections in religion, think themselves in possession of all truth, and that [to the extent that] others differ from them, it is so far error.

The most obvious consequence of naïve realism is that people expect other reasonable and objective perceivers to share their views and understandings—if not immediately, then at least after they have enlightened those others about the way things *really* are. Hence, one should expect *false consensus* and related egocentric biases in social perception (see Ross, Greene, & House, 1977; also review by Marks & Miller, 1987). Moreover, people will attribute bias and other malignant influences when others, including third-party mediators or those providing media coverage on issues of great concern to them, fail to share their "take" on issues and events. One dramatic example of this phenomenon was provided by Vallone, Ross, and Lepper (1985), who showed pro-Israeli and anti-Israeli viewers samples of the actual media coverage of the attack by Falangist gunmen on the Sabra and Chatilla refugee camps and found that both groups of partisan viewers overwhelmingly saw that coverage as slanted in favor of the "other side."

Another phenomenon arising at least partially from naïve realism is the tendency for people to make unwarranted dispositional inferences about other actors (another central insight to be discussed next), especially those who respond differently from them, and therefore differently from what seems warranted by the demands and constraints of the situation (Ross & Ward, 1996). Closely related is the tendency for actors and observers to offer divergent attributions for the same actions and outcomes (Jones & Nisbett, 1972)—with observers attributing actions and outcomes to inferred stable dispositions that the actors themselves attribute to situational factors, including specific goals and obstacles or constraints blocking the achievement of those goals. Other phenomena in which naïve realism can be expected to play a role include overconfident social predictions (Dunning, Griffin, Milojkovic, & Ross, 1990) and the failure to give assessments and judgments by one's peers as much weight as one's own.

We earlier noted social psychology's core message that people respond to subjective rather than objective reality. Indeed, the determinants of social perception and social cognition, and the various biases distorting these processes have preoccupied investigators from at least the era of Asch, Heider, and Ichheiser. Here we may also note evidence that most laypeople recognize many of the biases we study, but they consistently believe that those biases apply to *others* more than to themselves. In fact, the amount of bias they attribute to a given individual proves a direct function of the amount of disagreement between that individual and themselves (Pronin, Gilovich, & Ross, 2004). This essential insight regarding the nature and impact of naïve realism is of particular applied significance in understanding and addressing interpersonal and intergroup conflict. Even friends and intimate partners are apt to feel in contexts of disagreement that the problem is the other person's lack of objectively and, in cases of "hurt feelings," either the insensitivity of the person who has hurt them or the hypersensitivity of the person accusing them of the relevant abuse. When problems escalate to the point where some third party is consulted, both parties proceed in the vain hope and expectation that the counselor will see that *their* view is the reasonable one, and that it is their partner who needs to be "set straight."

Most disputants truly feel that their side is "right," that the other side is "wrong" (knowingly wrong and insincere, or perhaps even worse, sincere but deluded and blinded by their biases). Partisans also sincerely feel that "objective" third parties should take their side. Naïve realism has relevance as well for issues involving friction between different cultures or subcultures (wherein each makes invidious comparisons between "our" ways of looking at the world and deciding what is natural, good, moral, and enlightened, versus "their" ways). The same invidious "us" versus "them" comparisons arise with respect to matters of race, gender,

and class as well. It is rarely possible to get people to recognize fully the degree to which their own perceptions and assessments are subject to "top-down" influences and biases of the same sort, and to the same degree, as those that influence others from different backgrounds.

Academics in the humanities and social sciences may pay lip service to such recognition in their writing and theorizing, but it does not prevent them from opining about matters of public concern with unwarranted certainty, and too often with scorn for those who disagree. Moreover, when people recognize that they are seeing issues and events through the prism of their personal experiences or group identity, they insist that those influences are a source of enlightenment, while regarding such influences on others as a source of distortion. In the context of intergroup conflict, perhaps the best one can hope for is a willingness to attribute disagreements to sources of bias that are "normal"—that is, products of motivational and cognitive processes such as wishful thinking and biased assimilation of information that are shared by all people—rather than attributing them to unique or uniquely strong pathologies of the "other."

Lay Dispositionism and Its Consequences

A second insight intimately linked to the situationist tradition, one with profound applied implications, is that laypeople (and often even experts) generally fail to fully appreciate the power of the field of external or "situational" forces that can compel or constrain the choices that actors make. And even when experience and education gives us such appreciation in one behavioral domain, this insight is rarely generalized to new domains. Thus even a hard-won appreciation of the lessons of Asch, Milgram, Zimbardo, and company may not prevent an overly skeptical view of so-called "false confessions" (Kassin, 2008), which, along with erroneous but confident recollections and eye-witness testimony, are a major source of wrongful convictions (Dunning & Stern, 1994; Loftus, 2003; Wells, Memon, & Penrod, 2006; Wells & Olson, 2003; Wright & Loftus, 2008). We insist that *we* could never be induced by artful interrogators to confess to a crime that we did not commit (which may be correct) and that those who do offer false confessions must be dim-witted, weak, or plagued by a guilty conscience (which generally is not correct). Such misguided emphasis on the "dispositions" of the relevant actors, as Lewin (1931) observed long ago, represents a failing of lay psychology, in somewhat the same way that "Aristotelian" conceptions regarding the movement of objects (as opposed to Newtonian physics, which recognizes the role of forces between objects) erroneously attributed such movement to inherent properties of those objects rather than the forces acting on and between them.

Lay dispositionism obviously also relates obliquely to the question of "nature versus nurture," and not so obliquely to debates about the relative power of situational versus dispositional factors—debates prompted in part by the relative paucity of findings showing larger-than-expected predictive power of familiar, trait-like, personality variables. As alluded to earlier, the debate is intractable, indeed meaningless, when it is discussed in the abstract, rather than with respect to *particular* personal and situational factors. Indeed, a review of our situationist classics reveals that most of these studies involved a limited number of very specific sources of influence, most notably, channel factors and sources of actual and/or inferred group norms and standards.

The much larger set of studies potentially relevant to our present discussion are demonstrations that, in the laboratory and in everyday life, the behavior of a given individual with respect to willingness to take risks or delay gratification or to display cooperativeness or altruism (or many other dimensions that we typically think of as personality, temperament, or character) is apt to vary and appear "inconsistent" across settings. Some of that variability is random, or at least a product of factors that we cannot discern. Some simply reflects the influences of situational pressures or constraints in any given situation that make people in general more or less likely to behave in ways that we characterize with terms such as honesty, or selfishness, or for that matter liberalism or conservatism. Some of the variability reflects the influence not only of specific situational pressures and constraints but also of factors that determine the perceptual salience of particular stimulus features, or the cognitive availability of specific associations, schemas, or personal goals at a given point in time for the relevant actor.

Why does experience not educate the layperson to the impact of situational factors relative to that of stable personal attributes? The answer to this question is that much of the time the people we know and encounter in everyday experience *do* confirm our expectations about their behavior, even expectations based on our past experiences (Swann & Bosson, this volume). But such confirmations do not necessarily indicate broad, stable, individual differences; and even where such differences seem evident, they may themselves reflect the impact of situational factors. First, person and situation are inevitably confounded in the real world, unless a clever researcher finds a way to "unconfound" them (Mischel, 1968, 1973), because many situational factors (e.g., role and relational demands, reputational concerns, commitments, and the costs versus benefits of honoring or not honoring those commitments) persist over time, at least in the actor's dealings with particular people, and may even persist across diverse contexts.

Second, once people *choose* situations (as when they undertake a program of study or enter a career), those choices in turn guide and constrain their behavior—for example, by obliging them to make commitments to other people. Third, as Lewin observed, actors are a part of their own life space; other people respond to physical and social characteristics of the actor in ways that in turn influence the actor (Gilbert & Jones, 1986). Finally, both personal factors and situational factors create "cumulative consequences" in a way that magnifies the effects of either and produces stability over time (Caspi, Bem, & Elder, 1989; Caspi, Elder, & Bem, 1987, 1988).

In his 2008 best-seller *Outliers,* Malcolm Gladwell describes several compelling cases reflecting the cumulative consequences of situational factors. Some of these relate to culture or subculture and therefore to values, aspirations, and reference groups, but some involve situational advantages or disadvantages that are essentially matters of coincidence (for example, the predominance of professional hockey players whose birthdate guaranteed that they would be older and physically more mature than most of their cohort in youth hockey programs, which in turn meant that they would get to play more, get more attention from coaches, derive greater self-esteem from that domain, and thus practice harder and advance to higher levels of competition). Particular traits, such as patience, persistence, and self-mastery, whether the product of relatively innate temperaments or parenting practices and other features of early social learning, can have similar cumulative consequences, as Walter Mischel documented in reporting the surprisingly high correlation between children's nursery school performance in his famous delay of gratification task and subsequent measures of study habits and academic success (Shoda, Mischel, & Peake, 1990). Work by Bandura (1977a) on self-efficacy and Dweck (1986) on personal theories regarding fixed or malleable abilities similarly suggests that individual differences at one point in time, regardless of their origins, can lead to choices that effectively change the actor's life-space and magnify the impact of those personal characteristics.

Although dispositionist bias is evident when laypeople are surprised by the "non-obvious" results of cleverly crafted psychology experiments of the sort we highlighted earlier, their inability to outguess wily experimenters is obviously not the extent, or even an important aspect, of the problem. The more important consequence is our failure to realize the extent to which the same person (or group) may behave very differently when the balance of the relevant situational forces and constraints (e.g., role demands, reputational concerns, commitments, or incentive structures) changes. This point has been driven home to social psychologists who work with community and political leaders whose earlier histories included violence and terrorism. One such leader (David Ervine, a Northern Ireland "Loyalist"), in an address at Stanford University, explained that, in his case, it was a matter of "51% vs. 49%"—that this "change" involved not a transformation of character but a kind of "tipping point" whereby the futility and costs of violence became marginally more obvious and the prospects for securing social justice through normal politics became marginally brighter. He then added the striking comment that when he was only 51% certain about the decision to embrace bombing as a tactic, he was still 100% a "bomber," and now that he is only 51% certain about the prospects for change through peaceful means, he is 100% a politician and peace activist.

Although the tendency for laypeople to underestimate the role of situational determinants is ubiquitous (at least in Western countries), that tendency is not invariant. In fact, research has revealed counterexamples whereby the influence lay psychologists assign to certain extrinsic factors— i.e., salient, tangible rewards and penalties, and self-serving motives more generally—is *exaggerated,* and the role of more intrinsic motives is *underestimated* (Miller, 1999). Indeed, Lepper, Greene, and Nisbett (1973) documented something akin to such misattribution in *self*-perception in a study with obvious implications for parents and teachers. The investigators showed that the amount of time that nursery school children opted to play with "magic markers" depended on the presence or absence of a prior extrinsic motive (the prospect of receiving a "Good Player" award). As predicted, children who previously had played with the markers anticipating the relevant award later showed less interest in that activity than children who previously had done so without any prospect of an award. However, no such undermining of intrinsic interest occurred when the same award was presented without prior mention, and thus represented a "bonus" rather than a "bribe" (Lepper & Greene, 1978).

Counterexamples wherein the role of certain situational pressures and constraints is *over*estimated by observers, and sometimes also the actors themselves, have significance for theory. They suggest the dispositionist bias is not inevitable (or "fundamental," in the sense of being irreducible) but is rather the product of many different determining factors that may operate to different degrees in different contexts. Thus, Quattrone (1982) proposed that people making attributions typically begin by making a dispositional attribution, which they "adjust" (insufficiently) in light of what they know about situational pressures and constraints (Gilbert, Pelham, & Krull, 1988). Indeed, the lay dispositionism apparent in most everyday interpretations of behavior seems almost *over*determined—a reflection not only of cognitive and perceptual factors, but also of motivational, linguistic, cultural, and even ideological factors (Ross, 1977).

An early and seminal contribution to the attribution literature by Jones and Nisbett (1972) reported both anecdotal and experimental evidence showing that people may recognize the influence of particular situational factors on self more than on others, and thus be more willing to ascribe cross-situationally consistent dispositions to others than to self. In accounting for this self-other divergence in the attribution process, Jones and Nisbett cited the importance of two factors. One of these, little investigated at the time, was a difference in the amount and richness of information about past behavior. That is, actors obviously have more information about cross-situational variation in their actions and outcomes in different situations that seemingly tap the same disposition. More specifically, actors are more aware that their actions have varied as a function of situational demands and constraints, short-term goals and priorities, and even passing mood states. (Generally, investigators either ignored such factors, tried to "control" for them by giving the observer additional information, or investigated attributions about responses to novel choices or situations to which past behavior seemed irrelevant.)

The second factor they discussed, and the one that most caught the attention of investigators at the time, was the obvious actor-observer difference in "perspective" and "focus of attention." Investigators were quick to use video-replays (Storms, 1973), seating arrangements (Taylor & Fiske, 1975), and the simple act of looking in a mirror (Duvall & Wicklund, 1972) to demonstrate the effects on attributions of giving observers the perspectives of actors and vice versa, and more generally to show that many other manipulations that made features of the actor or the situation confronting the actor more salient could alter causal attributions (McArthur & Post, 1977; Taylor, Fiske, Etcoff, & Ruderman, 1978; Taylor & Koivumaki, 1976). More recent investigators, bucking the current trend to emphasize cognitive factors over perceptual ones, have explored the effects of subtler and more refined perspective manipulations on people's interpretations of and reactions to both past and future events (Libby, Eibach, & Gilovich, 2005; Pronin & Ross, 2006).[7]

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[7] In an important extension of this work on similarities and differences in actor versus observer attribution, Nisbett and Wilson (1977) demonstrated that actors and observers generally are subject to the same sources of accuracy and error in the attribution process—i.e., that both interpret the available information in light of their lay theories. While actors may sometimes have access to private experiential *content* (thoughts and feelings, construals, goals, etc.) that gives them an advantage over observers, they do not have direct access to any "process" information that guarantees the veridicality of their causal inferences (see also Nisbett & Ross, 1980, pp. 205-226).

Both lay dispositionism and the tendency for observers to be less sensitive than actors to the role of situational pressures and constraints have important real-world implications. Lack of appreciation of the impact of situational factors other than salient prospective extrinsic incentives and disincentives does more than foster erroneous interpersonal inferences and undue pessimism about the possibility of behavior change. It leads people to overlook factors that may prove important determinants of success or failure in efforts to produce such changes. This "miscalibration" regarding strategies for achieving change leads us to be less effective than we could be, whether the behavior we seek to change is that of friends, family members, neighbors, co-workers, or students. The success of programs directed at citizens whose current practices are at the root of problems regarding public health, environmental protection, crime prevention, or promotion of better intergroup relations similarly will depend on our increasing sophistication about the role of social and situational factors.

The Need to See the Self as Consistent, Rational, and Moral

The last three decades of American social psychology (and, not coincidentally American pop psychology and perhaps American society as well) have been heavily focused on the self. Indeed, focus on the autonomous self seems to be a distinguishing, even defining, characteristic of our everyday psychology, at least in Western cultures. The study of the processes by which individuals come to know and make inferences about themselves and evaluate themselves relative to others, and later of the biases—cognitive, perceptual, and motivational—affecting such processes, received a major impetus from the work of Bem (1967, 1972) and the attribution theorists. Work on self-schemas (Markus, 1977) and more dynamic theories about capacities of the self (e.g., Bandura, 1977a, 1997; Dweck, 1999; Dweck & Leggett, 1988) have also been influential. Within the larger culture, popular self-help books, seminars, and parental education classes, particularly in the latter part of the twentieth century, have stressed the need for each of us to "feel good" about ourselves, and also the obligation we have to help our children, students, and friends feel good about *them*selves, even in the face of failures and less than praiseworthy behavior. Indeed, countless studies and everyday experience alike suggest that most people do succeed in developing and maintaining a generally positive view of self.

Two recurrent themes underlie research in this area (Aronson, Wilson, & Akert, 2007; Swann & Bosson, this volume). The first involves the tendency for actors to see themselves as coherent, consistent, and rational, despite behavioral evidence that seemingly challenges that view—that is,

when their behavior shows changes across time and circumstances and especially when it varies as a function of subtle situational forces and constraints whose determinative role is not apparent to them. Within Western cultures in particular, people place a value on cross-situational consistency, and while they acknowledge that they respond adaptively to changes and differences in circumstances, they generally have a strong sense of a consistent self and do not subscribe to the notion of socially situated identities. The second theme, which connects academic and pop psychology, involves the struggle to maintain and enhance self-esteem, to see the self not only as coherent and rational, but also as good, moral, competent, in control of one's fate, and in tune with both one's own values and the norms and values of the people whose opinions one values.

This striving to see one's actions both as consistent across situations and as commendable or at least justifiable, can be characterized as "dissonance theory writ large," with the proviso (following Aronson, 1969) that actors are motivated to see themselves as *both* coherent and esteemworthy. People assimilate new information in light of their existing theories, beliefs, and larger social, religious, and political ideologies in a way that shields them from the need to acknowledge error, when such acknowledgment would be painful or dissonant. To some extent they also see and interpret events through the prism of their needs and motives in a manner that similarly shields them from discomfort. "Self-serving" or "ego-defensive" attributions play a role here. That is, people can make "dispositional" attributions for behavior that reflects well on the self and make situational attributions or offer other exculpatory explanations for behavior that reflects badly on them (Fiske & Taylor, 2008, pp. 159–160). But, as Heider (1958) noted, the need to learn and respond adaptively sets limits on such "wishful thinking" and self-deception.

The literature on self-serving attributions, however, has become increasing complex. First, everyday life offers many instances in which people seem to blame themselves for failures and unfortunate events under circumstances in which peers and even neutral observers offer more charitable attributions, and at least some laboratory studies offer similar evidence (e.g., Gilovich, Medvec, & Savitsky, 2000; Savitsky, Epley, & Gilovich, 2001). Second, taking credit for success and blaming failure on external factors beyond one's control may simply be rational; successes are intended outcomes that one plans for and works toward, whereas failures are often the product of obstacles too daunting to overcome or unforeseeable circumstances beyond one's control. Third, even when an apparently self-serving pattern of personal attributions for success and situational attributions for failure is found, it is difficult to determine when such attributions are motivated distortions,

rather than the product of cognitive distortions that happen to have self-serving affective consequences. Finally, it is often difficult to know whether public assertions involving the taking of credit (or for that matter taking blame) faithfully reflect the individuals' private assessments or are merely lip-service declarations designed to serve some social motive. These complexities have discouraged recent investigators from pursuing this issue—at least in terms of any general, context-independent, tendency—and to use Jones's (1985) term, the disentangling of motivational versus cognitive determinants of attributional bias has become a sinking ship.

Of greater contemporary interest are research findings showing that people engage in selective investment of ego. These findings, which have obvious and potentially disturbing implications regarding education and other vehicles for overcoming social and educational disadvantage, suggest that people "identify" with, care about, and invest energy in bettering themselves, for dimensions of potential self-esteem in which they have experienced, and/or expect to experience, success. Conversely, they "disidentify" from, and fail to invest effort in, or evaluate their worth in terms of, dimensions of potential evaluation at which they have failed or expect failure (Crocker & Major, 1989; Dunning, 2005; Kunda, 1987; Steele, 1988).

Although the processes described above have been the most frequent targets of research, they are by no means the only ones that people employ in order to see themselves as coherent, commendable, and in control of their destiny, and to ward off potential threats to those perceptions. Most often, people do this in obvious and even laudable ways—by trying to meet their group's standards of behavior and achievement, which they have adopted as their own. Once again, however, it is less obvious processes that have attracted the greatest research interest. One such process involves selective or strategic social comparison. People can compare themselves to others who are less well off than themselves, or even to themselves at a time when they were worse off. In a seminal early paper in health psychology, Taylor (1983) described how cancer patients coped with their illness through such comparisons—contrasting their symptoms, treatment options, and family circumstances with even more dire diagnoses, options, and circumstances. By contrast, of course, Festinger and his colleagues argued strongly that, in our society at least, most comparisons are made upward, in an invidious direction that may fuel effort and achievement, but often at the price of dissatisfaction.

Selective comparison also allows one to defend one's sense of fairness and morality in the face of dubiously moral or fair behavior, by comparing oneself to others whose behavior in the pertinent domain is equally or even more suspect (Bandura, 1999, Monin, 2007). Another process,

which both "haves" and "have-nots" can employ to reduce feelings of guilt, shame, and other threats to self-regard, is that of "system justification" (Jost & Banaji, 1994; Jost & Kay, this volume; Lerner, 1980; Pratto, Sidanius, Stallworth, & Malle, 1994). This process involves a range of strategies, including the blaming of victims for their misfortunes or continuing disadvantages, the belief that society is ultimately or globally fair (or at least as fair as it could be without imposing odious restrictions), the presumption that the benefits that one reaps within the system are worth the costs, or even the faith that privations in this life will be replaced by the glories of some existence after death.

Before leaving this topic, it is worth noting the link between striving for a positive view of the self and naïve realism. Because people are subject to various "positive illusions" (Taylor & Brown, 1988; see also Greenwald, 1980, on the "totalitarian ego"), they do not see themselves as they appear to disinterested observers; and they do not take kindly to those who challenge their illusions or who use different bases for assessment or different standards for comparison. Conversely, when others seem less than welcoming of one's constructive criticisms, gentle warnings about closed-mindedness or wishful thinking, or comments about related displays of self-serving or belief-preserving bias, the attribution is a censorious one.

We are reminded, here, of the wry and telling observation by comedian George Carlin with regard to driving: "*Ever notice that anyone going slower than you is an idiot and anyone going faster is a maniac?!*" To Carlin's insight, which captures the essence of naïve realism as well as any experiment we know, we would add the observation that people characteristically see those who are less honest than themselves on their income tax returns as cheats and those who are more honest as naïve; by the same token, they see others who want to move slower than they do in the direction of any particular social reform as reactionaries and those who advocate moving faster than they deem prudent as unrealistic dreamers.

Confirmation Biases: Impact of Expectations, Beliefs, and Social Representations

Our final social-psychological insight concerns the impact of beliefs and expectations. More specifically, it involves the impact of biases in perception and cognition that make one see, find evidence for, and even produce, what one expects to see or have occur (or, in some cases, what one hopes or fears to see or have occur). The biblical parable of the "scouts" who, depending on the state of mind they brought to their task, brought back reports either of forbidding terrain peopled with fearsome giants or a "land of

milk and honey" long ago suggested the impact of such biases on perception. So did the Hastorf and Cantril (1954) study noted earlier on the conflicting perceptions and recollections of Princeton and Dartmouth football fans. Such biases do more than confirm expectations and serve wishful thinking. They make it difficult for people to abandon theories or beliefs that are inaccurate and that serve them badly, even in the face of evidence that unbiased observers would find convincing. Lord, Ross, and Lepper (1979) and Edwards and Smith (1996), for example, provided a striking example of the capacity of objectively mixed evidence regarding the deterrent efficacy of capital punishment to strengthen the conflicting views of opposing partisans.

Indeed, studies of biased perception and assimilation of information have been a staple in social and cognitive psychology. What most intrigues those outside our field, however, is the capacity of beliefs, expectations, and "prophesies" (Merton, 1948)—those one holds about oneself and those held about one by others—to prompt actions or failures to act that reinforce those convictions (see Snyder, 1992). In some cases, the consequences of these processes are benign or positive—individuals and groups motivated to confirm positive expectations, including "positive illusions" (Taylor, 1989; Taylor & Armor, 1996; Taylor & Brown, 1988) about themselves, tend to act accordingly; and often they benefit directly or indirectly from doing so. Similarly, self-confirming positive beliefs, such as the belief that success is determined less by innate ability than by persistent effort or flexibility in approach (Weiner, 1974), or that abilities and even general intelligence are themselves malleable rather than fixed (Bandura, 1997; Dweck, 1999; Nisbett, 2009)—are not mere "illusions"; they are important and empowering *insights.*

In other cases, however, belief-confirming biases and especially belief-perpetuating behaviors can have malignant consequences. In particular, they can result in individual and collective efforts to counteract or reduce the threat of negative beliefs and expectations in ways that have deleterious personal and social consequences and that may even serve, paradoxically, to confirm those negative expectations. The phenomenon of "self-handicapping" (Jones & Berglas, 1979) involves an all-too-familiar type of behavioral confirmation—one designed (sometimes consciously, sometimes perhaps without self-awareness) to dampen the attributional threat of a negative outcome, but does so in ways that makes that outcome more probable. (Thus self-handicapping constitutes yet another process that protects people's ability to see themselves, and to be seen by others, in positive terms.) The most obvious example of this phenomenon is provided in cases where actors withdraw effort and personal investment in the face of the threat of failure;

but alcoholism, drug abuse, tardiness, belligerence toward supervisors or co-workers, refusal to conform to institutional standards of dress, hygiene, speech, or other violations of behavioral norms can also be seen as instances of self-handicapping.

Finally, as Wegner, Schneider, Carter, and White (1987) showed in a simple study with a result that is both non-obvious yet obviously true, attempting to avoid a given action, feeling, or action sometimes increases rather than decreases its likelihood. The instruction "try not to think of a white bear" as Wegner et al. showed, ultimately increased the frequency of such ursine imaginings, as compared to those reported by a group asked to think of a white bear from the outset. Trying hard to avoid physical tics, speech disfluencies, slips of the tongue, and the like is apt to prove similarly counterproductive, and certainly is not the optimal clinical strategy, when anxiety and excessive self-monitoring already are part of the problem (Wegner, 1994).

When, early in his first term, as the Great Depression tightened its grip on the United States, President Franklin Roosevelt said "we have nothing to fear but fear itself," he was mindful of more collective processes and consequences. That is, fear of worsening economic conditions, bank failures, and job losses leads to behaviors (unwillingness to spend or invest and withdrawal of funds from banks) that bring about precisely thomase dire results, which in turn further encourage the behaviors that are exacerbating the problem, in a classic "vicious circle." (The economic crisis that is gripping the United States and most other countries at the time we are writing this chapter makes accounts of that cycle all too familiar.) Social psychologists are hardly unique in noting the power of perceptions and expectations to shape reality. What they brought to the topic were demonstrations pinpointing some of the processes by which this occurs, and illustrating how it might play a role in various social phenomena of concern.

Few in our society would dispute the fact that one's goals and plans, and one's confidence or lack of confidence about what one can accomplish, play a significant role in determining what one exposes oneself to, seeks to learn and perfect, and is willing to take risks or delay gratification in order to achieve. Equally obvious is the impact of other people's plans for us and expectations about what we can accomplish, both on what opportunities we are given and how we take advantage or fail to take advantage of the opportunities that present themselves. To some extent, we become what we seek, and expect, and want to become; to some extent, we also become what others want for us, demand of us, and help us to become. However, it is worth noting that acceptance of this seeming truism is by no means universal. Members of many other societies would assign a larger role to destiny or God's will or one's place in some fixed hierarchy. Even within our own society (and some domains of psychology), we would still find disagreements about the role of nature versus nurture in determining not only capacities to achieve, but also the aspects of temperament, tastes, and motivation that play a role in what one strives for and succeeds or fails in achieving.

The less obvious insight is that beliefs and expectations can be fulfilled and perpetuated through processes other than the powerful but mundane ones of deliberate goal-setting, teaching and learning, and sustained goal-directed effort either by actors or those in a position to help (or thwart) such effort. The keen-eyed sociologist Erving Goffman (1959) offered a "dramaturgical analysis" of social interaction that emphasized the constraining effects of roles, role-based expectations, and audiences. The novelist Kurt Vonnegut (in *Mother Night*) warned that since we "are what we pretend to be" we should take great care in *choosing* what we pretend to be; and Shaw's *Pygmalion* is the famed story of a working-class girl who is tutored about upper class speech, manners, and dress so that she can, and does, pass as a "lady."

There is more than literary and anecdotal evidence to attest to the existence and potency of behavioral confirmation. In one famous early study (Kelley, 1950), students encountered a guest lecturer who had previously been described to them with a list of traits that included either the adjective "warm" or "cold." In another, even more famous, albeit controversial study featuring a manipulation of expectations (Rosenthal & Jacobsen, 1968), teachers were led to expect that certain students in their classes were about to show learning spurts. In both cases, the result was a change in the ensuing student-teacher interactions that confirmed the relevant expectations (although in the latter case the phenomenon appears to have been largely limited to students in one early grade).

A third slightly later study (Miller, Brickman, & Bolen, 1975), which remains less well known than it should be given the clarity of its applied implications, involved the direct effects of labeling on youngsters who were labeled. This study showed that whereas exhorting primary school students to refrain from a particular practice (e.g., classroom littering) had only a modest and temporary effect on behavior (objectively undeserved), communications from their teacher, the principal, and the school custodian that students deserved recognition for already showing such behavior had a larger effect, and one that continued to be apparent in the period after the "nagging versus labeling" manipulation had ended.

In yet another study from that era (Snyder, Tanke, & Berscheid, 1977), young men who had been shown a picture of either a very attractive or less attractive young woman then engaged in a telephone conversation with

someone whom they believed to be that woman. The result, again, was an interaction that reflected the effect of the research participants' expectations. The belief that they were talking to someone particularly attractive changed the behavior of the young men, and that of the young women (who had no inkling about the experimental manipulation that was influencing the young men) in ways discernable to raters who were blind to that manipulation. The young men came away from their experience with an impression of the person with whom they had been conversing that was consistent both with their state of mind during the conversation and the later ratings of the outside observers.

A particularly pernicious example of self-fulfilling beliefs and expectations, and the one most studied by social psychologists, is that of stereotypes and other negative beliefs about particular groups of people. Some of these effects are obvious, although no less important for their obviousness. If it is widely believed that the members of some group disproportionately possess some virtue or vice relevant to academic or on-the-job performance, one is likely (in the absence of specific legal or social sanctions) to make school admission or hiring decisions accordingly—and in so doing to deprive or privilege group members in terms of opportunities to nurture their talents, acquire credentials, or otherwise succeed or fail in accord with the beliefs and expectations that dictated their life chances.

We will discuss some less obvious effects of racism, sexism, and other types of stigmatizing belief systems later in this chapter. For now, let us consider just one classic study (Word, Zanna, & Cooper, 1974) that nicely fits our criterion as an empirical parable. The investigators first showed that White Princeton students interviewing individuals they believed to be prospective job candidates unwittingly afforded differential treatment to White and Black candidates—seating themselves farther away from the latter, showing more discomfort and awkwardness, and ending the interview more quickly. In a second phase of the project, the authors trained interviewers to treat new applicants, all of whom were White, the way either Black or White applicants had been treated in the earlier phase of the study. When videotapes of those interviews were subsequently viewed by evaluators, those receiving the treatment previously afforded to Black applicants were judged more negatively than those receiving the treatment previously afforded to White applicants. Similar findings, incidentally, were shown much more recently in an analogous study regarding the effects of the treatment received by homosexual versus heterosexual job applicants (Hebl, Foster, Mannix, & Dovidio, 2002).

As is so often the case in social psychology, the take-away message from years of research is not as simple as one might assume from the description of a few classic demonstration experiments. People do not always simply do what those interacting with them hope and expect; sometimes, especially in the case of negative expectations, they both work hard to disconfirm those expectations and succeed. Consider the phenomenon of psychological reactance (Brehm, 1966), whereby individuals resist attempts to push their choice in one direction by developing more positive feelings about the choices they are being prompted to give up (see also Ward & Brenner, 2006). Moreover, in many contexts people who are adversaries or even just competitors see influence attempts in strategic terms (if they want me to do, buy, or accept X instead of Y, then my doing, buying, or accepting X instead of Y must be good for them, and therefore not so good for me).

In fact, even when people are not in an antagonistic or suspicious frame of mind, they do not necessarily show the responses that are being sought—even by skilled experimental social psychologists—when those responses tap motivations and concerns more potent than a vague inclination to follow where they are led. Such resistance and reactance on the part of research participants is perhaps something that journal reviewers, for whom complaints about the possible role played by "Rosenthal" and "Hawthorne" effects are almost reflexive, should keep in mind when they evaluate studies with consequential dependent measures. (More than one of our colleagues has mused that if research participants were as prone to go along with demand characteristics and to show experimenter bias effects as reviewers seem to imagine, our collective files of failed experiments would be notably thinner.)

In most real-world influence attempts (e.g., charitable appeals, requests for favors, pleas for better pay or working conditions, ads trumpeting the merits of political candidates, or calls for the cessation of violence), the hope and expectation of the party making that attempt is explicit. In this regard, and in recognition of the situationist tradition in social psychology, we should remember that expectations are not communicated only in words or gestures. The environment itself "signals" norms and expectations that can in turn influence behavior. The "broken windows" thesis offered by Wilson and Kelling (1982), and much lauded by thoughtful conservative commentators, suggested that tolerance for vandalism, graffiti, antisocial actions, and other "trivial" offenses against social order signals a permissiveness that encourages more serious offenses. This thesis (which can be seen as a borrowing of the tipping point notion implicit in Lewin's tension system formulation long before Gladwell, 2000, popularized the phrase in the title of his best-selling book) has recently been given a successful empirical test by Keizer, Lindenderg, and Steg (2008), who demonstrated the phenomenon of "cross norm" violation, that is, disorder and non-lawfulness in one domain (e.g.,

graffiti or littering) resulting in increased violation (e.g., trespassing or even mail theft) in another.

SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY TODAY

Recent history in social psychology has seen contributions to theory and research in three major areas: the study of stereotyping, prejudice, and racism; the study of culture and cultural influences; and the study of cognitive and motivational influences beyond, or even contrary to, the rational self-interest model central to economics and other social sciences. Each area has witnessed upswings and downturns in the interest it has received, and each has seen marked shifts in focus as new generations of researchers have come to the fore.

Stereotyping and Prejudice

From the 1920s to the present, a major concern in social psychology has been the nature and effects of stereotyping and prejudice; however, the focus of research has regularly shifted. In the 1920s and 1930s, the main concern of leading researchers including Thurstone, Bogardus, Likert, and others was the development of reliable and valid methods for measuring negative attitudes toward various racial and ethnic groups. Then, in the 1930s and 1940s, as Miller and his Yale colleagues sought to translate psychoanalytic insights into learning theory models, studies of the motivational bases for prejudice came to the fore in social psychology, and phenomena such as scapegoating and displacement were explored empirically. At the same time, and in much the same spirit, personality theorists led by Adorno and colleagues explored ethnocentrism and authoritarianism.

Throughout that early period, as is the case today, social scientists recognized that cognitive processes as well as motivational ones were a central feature in the phenomena of concern. Walter Lippman, in his 1922 book on *Public Opinion,* gave the term "stereotype" its present meaning, and three decades later Gordon Allport, in *The Nature of Prejudice* (1954b), argued that stereotyping could be seen, in part, as a natural, if undesirable, consequence of ubiquitous and generally useful cognitive processes of categorization and discrimination (see Hamilton, 1981).

As social norms regarding public discourse on matters of race, ethnicity, and gender began to change following the 1954 Supreme Court decision integrating the nation's public schools and the Civil Rights Act of 1964, and as the Civil Rights Movement gained momentum, attitude measurement again became a focus of interest. Objective evidence of discrimination remained not only in the economy and job market but also in the courts (see Sommers & Ellsworth, 2001). But whereas Americans once freely reported their reluctance to accept someone Black, Jewish, Muslim, or Asian (or a member of some similarly discriminated-against group) in their neighborhoods, social clubs, or restaurants, previous measures no longer showed such overt public racism. Indeed, in contexts where liberal norms on matters of race hold sway, people avoid words and deeds that could even be *misinterpreted* as racist or sexist, unless they have first established their "moral credentials" as someone not subject to such biases (Monin & Miller, 2001). More subtle measures were developed, such as the modern or symbolic racism scales of Kinder, Sears, and McConahay, in order to detect less blatant forms of prejudice. This process continues, as today many items on the so-called Modern Racism Scale (McConahay, 1986) are no longer endorsed even by respondents who continue to harbor residues of prejudice (Dovidio & Gaertner and Yzerbyt & Demoulin, volume 2).

In the years since Jones's (1985) chapter, this field has been marked by two major undertakings. The first has involved the development of theory and measures recognizing ever more covert forms of stereotyping and prejudice—including "implicit" attitudes that may be embedded in the culture rather than solely in the minds of individuals (Banaji & Heiphetz, this volume). The second undertaking has involved a shift from the study of the *holders* of stereotypes and prejudices to the study of the effects on, and responses of, their *targets* (Swann & Bosson, this volume; Fiske, volume 2; Steele, 2010).

Although controversy currently surrounds the putative validity of tools designed to assess covert forms of stereotyping (Blanton et al., 2009; Greenwald, Poehlman, Uhlmann, & Banaji, 2009), such "implicit" measures may ultimately be shown to provide additional predictive validity over and above that offered by the standard explicit measures (e.g., Jordan, Spencer, Zanna, Hoshino-Browne, & Correll, 2003). The intriguing possibility also exists that explicit and implicit measures assess related but distinct constructs, each providing its own window on behavior. In particular, implicit measures may do a serviceable job of predicting behaviors that are normally free of conscious self-monitoring (e.g., opting to hand a pen to a member of a different race versus placing it on a table; Wilson, Lindsey, & Schooler, 2000), whereas explicit measures may do a better job of predicting behaviors that are subject to such monitoring and control (e.g., questionnaire ratings of an interaction partner of a different race; Dovidio, Kawakami, Johnson, Johnson, & Howard, 1997).

Issues of level of awareness and monitoring can have profound real-world consequences. Eberhardt, Goff, Purdie, and Davies (2004) showed that priming police

officers with crime-related words increased the attention they directed to Black faces relative to White faces. Correll et al. (2007) conceptually replicated that result but then demonstrated that trained police officers were less likely to exhibit racial bias in a simulated shooting context than were community members—i.e., that implicit associations notwithstanding, behaviors toward members of stigmatized groups that are deliberate and explicitly executed may, through self-monitoring and/or training, prove to be relatively unbiased by such associations.

In focusing on the effects of stereotyping and prejudice, perhaps the most important insights gained involve the coping strategies of targeted or "stigmatized" individuals. In innovative research, Crocker and Major (1989), proceeding from the surprising finding that members of stigmatized groups often show no deficit in self-esteem relative to members of non-stigmatized groups, suggested that individuals can use the fact of such stigmatization to maintain self-esteem—notably, by attributing negative outcomes, behaviors, and life circumstances to injurious prejudice rather than to their own failures and inadequacies.

Drawing on his work on self-affirmation (Steele, 1988), Claude Steele similarly argued that in certain "loaded" domains, notably those implicating intellectual achievement, stigmatized individuals can respond by "disidentifying" from that domain. As a consequence, in academic domains (as is the case for stigmatized African American students, and for women in the domain of mathematics), they underachieve and narrow their career opportunities accordingly. In discussing the processes and consequences of stigmatization, Steele (1997) pointedly maintained that the relevant toxic social representations are "in the air," not just in the mind of targeted individuals. As such, individuals do not personally need to accept or endorse those representations to suffer their effects. In the face of what Steele termed "stereotype threat," poor performance can result from the awareness that one risks confirming negative stereotypes—and from the resulting effects of anxiety and expenditure of cognitive resources that could otherwise be devoted to the task at hand (Schmader, Johns, & Forbes, 2008).

The Role of Culture

A second major issue that has received an enormous amount of recent attention is the topic of culture and cultural differences. Following WWII, almost all students of social psychology were familiar with the work of Ruth Benedict, Alfred Kroeber, and other anthropologists in the Franz Boas tradition. Social psychologists were frequently billeted in interdisciplinary programs, such as the Institute for Human Relations at Yale, the Institute for Social Research at Michigan, the Department of Social Relations at Harvard,

and the Department of Social Psychology at Columbia, where they worked side by side with Clyde Kluckholm, John Whiting, Margaret Mead, and other eminent scholars. Researchers in many places used the Human Relations Area Files (Whiting & Child, 1953) to empirically test postulated relationships between cultural practices or circumstances and features of modal personality (see also McClelland and colleagues', 1961, extensive work linking culture to achievement motivation). In short, the topic of cultural differences, and anthropology and sociology more generally, had long occupied a niche within social psychology. (Witness also the contents of three successive volumes of *Readings in Social Psychology,* in 1947, 1952, and 1958, sponsored by the Society for the Psychological Study of Social Issues, that were de rigueur for graduate students of the late 1950s and early 1960s.)

Soon after, however, culture virtually disappeared from mainstream social psychology. In part, this turning away from the study of culture may have reflected the Lewinian penchant for explaining social influences in terms of the immediate thoughts and feelings of the individuals who were interacting, which was ironic in light of Lewin's own emphasis on situational and normative influences. Despite efforts by Triandis (1968), and a few others who tested the "generalizability" of findings by trying to replicate classic American studies in other countries, interest in cultural differences within our field dropped close to zero. What created a sudden bandwagon was the ground-breaking work of Hazel Markus and Shinobu Kitayama (1991) and their colleagues (e.g., Morris & Peng, 1994; Nisbett, 2003), highlighting differences between Eastern and Western cultures (Heine, volume 2).

What made Markus and Kitayama's (1991) article on the "independent versus interdependent self" so impactful and a continuing impetus for new research? First and foremost, it offered an insight that was both powerful and correct (Shweder & Bourne, 1984; Triandis, 1989; Weisz, Rothbaum, & Blackburn, 1984). It was also partially a matter of timing, as it coincided both with demographic changes in the United States and the rise of China, Japan, and South Korea as economic powers and the emergence of the self as a focal topic (Baumeister, 1999). Additionally, it offered a strategy of proceeding from a nuanced analysis of a presumed cultural difference rather than a simple comparison of the way people from different cultures responded to research paradigms previously developed and tested in the United States and other Western countries. But the staying power of the topic additionally resulted from a timely shift in methodology.

As interesting and enlightening as the comparison of U.S. and Asian responses was to U.S. college students and most American researchers, the lessons that such

comparisons offered about other ways of thinking, feeling, and relating to family member and peers were ones that were already familiar to the average teenager in the "other" culture (and certainly to the many Asian and Asian American graduate students who entered our Ph.D. programs). What brought this work to the very center of our field, and what made even flagship journal reviewers and editors receptive, was a shift to 2×2 experimental designs that allowed a sharpening of hypotheses and findings. Researchers demonstrated that under one set of circumstances the assumed cultural difference in, for example, dissonance reduction (Kitayama, Snibbe, Markus, & Suzuki, 2004), attribution (Morris & Peng, 1994), self-determination (Iyengar & Lepper, 1999), or self-enhancement (Sedikides, Gaertner, & Toguchi, 2003) appears, while under another set of circumstances, it does not.

In the study of cultural diversity, the distinction between the Western World and the Far East has received the lion's share of attention (Brewer & Chen, 2007). But recent work on social class, subculture, and religious affiliations as moderator variables in helping us understand variability within our society has also gained currency. In the case of social class, Markus and colleagues (Snibbe & Markus, 2005; Stephens, Markus, & Townsend, 2007) have offered a compelling demonstration of differences between middle-class and working-class Americans in the specific domain of personal agency and choice. Thus, they have shown that, when making choices, working-class individuals place a premium on options that reflect similarity to others, whereas middle-class individuals are more likely to favor options that distinguish them from others. Exploring subcultures in the United States, Nisbett and Cohen and their colleagues (e.g., Cohen, Nisbett, Bowdle, & Schwarz, 1996; Nisbett & Cohen, 1996) have focused on a particular form of violence, namely that representing "honor killings," and other responses to insults and affronts, that the authors show to be especially characteristic of Southern U.S. states and of individuals who have migrated from the South. In such research, which featured a combination of laboratory studies, survey data, and crime statistics, once again the goal has not been simply to demonstrate the existence of group differences. Rather, it has been to illuminate how cultural forces interact with particular contextual factors to prime specific values (e.g., choice, autonomy, honor)—values that are not unique to a particular culture or subculture but that are understood and acted upon differently by different societies and by different groups within those societies.

Critique of *Homo Economicus*

A third topic with both a long history in social psychology and a more recent spiking of interest involves the limitations of *homo economicus*—the standard economic model of individuals as rational maximizers of utility that has dominated political theory since the eighteenth-century writings of Adam Smith and Jeremy Bentham (Tyler, Rasinski, & Griffin, 1986). Although our critiques today borrow heavily from modern work in the judgment and decision-making tradition, it can be noted that social psychologists never fully succumbed to the appeal of rational decision-making models and functionalist approaches more generally. They never forgot that people (to borrow a biblical maxim) "do not live by bread alone," but are influenced by a variety of social motives and values that get in the way of maximizing material outcomes (Frank, Gilovich, & Regan, 1993; Schwartz, 1994; Vohs, Mead, & Goode, 2006).

Indeed, people not only leave tips in restaurants that they anticipate never again visiting, they sacrifice and even die for beliefs that do not materially enrich them, or for that matter their kin and descendants (Kahneman, Knetsch, & Thaler, 1986; Miller, 1999; Tetlock, 2002). Moreover, the extent to which prosocial values (which sophisticated economists explain in terms of reputational concerns and other non-obvious but essentially self-serving motives) influence behavior proves highly susceptible to situational and schema-salience manipulations, a finding further attesting to the limitations of purely economic models (Mikulincer, Shaver, Gillath, & Nitzberg, 2005). Indeed, as the work of Frank, Gilovich, and Regan (1993) suggests, exposure to the self-interested model common in economics tends to breed self-interested behavior. Thus, undergraduates majoring in economics displayed much greater rates of defection in a standard Prisoner's Dilemma game (72%) than did nonmajors (47%).

A critique of *homo economicus,* especially in its simple formulation, has thus constituted a significant and continuing contribution of our field. (We not only insisted on having a place for altruism, morality, social reputation, and self-regard; we also recognized that behavior as well as beliefs can be dictated by attempts at dissonance reduction and rationalization, and that manipulations of small situational factors and the priming of particular goals, frames, or schemas that do not change objective costs or benefits can be highly impactful.) But above all, it is work in the prospect theory tradition of Kahneman and Tversky (e.g., 1979, 1984) and others who have applied framing and priming techniques to further challenge standard economic models and address practical issues of social policy innovation, that proved most challenging and decisive. Unlike the earlier pioneering work by Herbert Simon on bounded rationality, which demonstrated conditions under which a person might reasonably decide not to search for or insist on an optimal solution, Kahneman and Tversky's work illustrated pervasive biases that challenged fundamental

assumptions of the traditional economic model of human rationality.

More recent research by social psychologists on the effects of too much choice has further eroded the validity of models of decision making that assume rational outcome maximization. Iyengar and Lepper (2000) found that when given the opportunity to taste-test six jams, 30% of shoppers ultimately purchased a jar of jam. When given the chance to taste-test twenty-four jams, only 3% of shoppers subsequently made a purchase. The availability of an extensive choice set appears to have actually "demotivated" individuals from making a choice.

Drawing on this research, Schwartz et al. (2002) suggested a distinction between "maximizers," who, when faced with large choice sets, experience behavioral paralysis as they vainly attempt to select the "best" option, and "satisficers" (Simon, 1955), who are prone to select the first option that passes some threshold of acceptability (and who, in surveys, report themselves to be happier and less prone to depression than maximizers). Although there are no doubt cultural and situational variations determining preferences for large versus smaller choice sets, the potential implications of such work go beyond the concerns of shrewd marketing executives. Overwhelming citizens, in the name of free choice and personal responsibility, with enormous numbers of medical insurance, retirement investment, or health improvement plans may have the unfortunate unintended consequence of deterring them from making any decision at all (or at best of leading then to choose the most salient option). Clearly, research on better ways to frame and present options to help people make the choices that best serve them promises to be a growth industry for some time to come.

Promising New Directions

Many other topics and approaches are also stimulating new and potentially important work. Most of them draw on one or more of the field's four foundational insights discussed earlier. Space concerns compel us to offer only a sample of illustrative examples:

Evolutionary Psychology

The field of evolutionary psychology, with its singular ability to bring together structuralism and functionalism, represents the efforts of researchers in many disciplines, including biologists, sociologists, and anthropologists, as well as psychologists from many areas of psychology. The most powerful evolutionary ideas relevant to social psychology (such as those pertaining to romantic attraction, close relationships, and social development) are ones that relate directly or indirectly to sexual selection, mating strategies, and differential parental investment. One animating insight for this work is the fact that throughout most of human history, the two sexes have faced somewhat different adaptive challenges in the effort to produce and ensure the survival of offspring who will in turn reproduce. The other is that the mechanisms for meeting these challenges persist and continue to exert their influence (Buss, 1994; Neuberg, Schaller, & Kenrick, this volume).

No topic has been more controversial than the role of biologically based mechanisms of evolutionary origin versus social and cultural influences. Critics within social psychology (e.g., Eagly & Wood, 1999) complain that evolutionary psychologists give the latter influences too little weight, especially in considering sex differences. Critics outside the field complain that in considering contemporary human practices and preferences, "just-so" stories and teleological speculation are too often a substitute for the more rigorous strategy of cross-species comparisons and contrasts, with particular attention to species-specific behaviors that seem anomalous rather than obviously adaptive. Ironically, perhaps, the most persuasive rejoinder to critics of evolutionary approaches has been provided by the very same research strategy that cultural psychologist have used effectively—that is, distinguishing between conditions under which a given phenomenon should be present and when it should not.

For example, Haselton et al. (2007) reported that college women are more likely to "dress to impress," through self-grooming and ornamentation of attire, when in the fertile rather than the luteal phase of ovulation. Studies of this sort are not without their methodological critics and do not rule out non-evolutionary explanations for the phenomena in question, much less prove the more general contentions of evolutionary psychology, but they do reflect increased sophistication in theorizing and theory testing. Accordingly, they make it more difficult for social psychologists to dismiss such contentions because they are unwelcome. (As in other "nature vs. nurture" debates, it is important to remember that the fact of genetic or other biological determination need not say anything about degree of modifiability or susceptibility to environmental influence.)

A final point that particularly resonates with social psychologists, indeed one that was discussed by Leon Festinger (1983), concerns the contrast between conditions of the ancestral environment and those of the present day. Although speculative, such analyses may speak to the persistence of cognitive and motivational biases that appear maladaptive today. Perhaps most notable is the assumption that others share one's goals, tastes, and understandings of the world—which presumably was a lesser source of error and misunderstanding in a world when individuals lived in small bands

with peers who shared their experiences, and strangers with disparate histories, needs, and preferences were rare.

Implicit Influences

As seen in recent research on prejudice and stereotyping, investigation of non-conscious priming effects has become increasingly prevalent and provocative. While much of the work has involved simple effects on recognition and recall, there are also some behavioral effects worth noting. In perhaps the best known of these studies, Bargh, Chen, and Burrows (1996) demonstrated that participants who performed a sentence unscrambling task featuring words such as *Florida* and *bingo* subsequently walked down a hallway more slowly than participants who had unscrambled words with no such age-relevant connotations. In an equally provocative study, Dijksterhuis and van Knippenberg (1998) reported that respondents primed with a professor stereotype correctly answered more Trivial Pursuit items than did those primed with a secretary stereotype. Finally, in a study designed to challenge the formulations of conventional economists, Kay, Wheeler, Bargh, and Ross (2004) showed that players in an Ultimatum Game primed by the presence of business-relevant objects (such as a briefcase) made less generous offers than players primed by the presence of objects related more to academia (such as a backpack) than business. In these and many other similar tasks, the vast majority of participants appear to evince no awareness that their behavior has been influenced by the relevant prime (Banaji & Heiphetz; Bargh et al.; Dijksterhuis, all in this volume).

A parallel development in the domain of person perception concerns the rapidity (and often surprising accuracy) with which we form initial impressions (Ambady, Bernieri, & Richeson, 2000)—impressions that appear to be largely intuitive responses to nonverbal cues, such as body posture, eye contact or gaze avoidance, and various spontaneous expressions of emotion that have been shown to play an important role in social interactions (Ekman, 2007; Ellsworth, Carlsmith, & Henson, 1972). In many ways, this research represents a natural extension of earlier work on the priming, or enhanced accessibility, of emotion and cognitions. At the same time, a clear debt is owed to the seminal work of Nisbett and Wilson (1977), who argued that higher-order cognitive processes leave no conscious substrate available to introspection. As in recent work investigating cognitive processes more generally, implicit priming entails a recognition of dual processes, whereby one set of responses (e.g., behavior in response to an unconscious prime) appears to occur relatively automatically, whereas a second set (e.g., behavior in response to consciously perceived stimuli) typically requires deliberation.

Of course, even the most ardent supporter of implicit processes would acknowledge its limitations. Questions remain about the power, flexibility, and duration of priming effects, and most demonstrations continue to involve responses such as recognition memory rather than complex behavior (Mitchell, 2006). Furthermore, as Bargh et al. (1996) acknowledge, to be effective, subliminal behavioral primes must be compatible with an individual's current goals and priorities. In short, we have yet to enter the era when fanciful claims about the effectiveness of "subliminal" advertisements, such as those in Vance Packard's (1957) best-seller, *The Hidden Persuaders,* have become valid.

Terror Management Theory

In a field often lacking grand, organizing theories, terror management theory (TMT) has bucked the trend, producing over 300 studies. Inspired by the work of anthropologist Ernest Becker, the originators of the theory argue that knowledge of the finality of life induces people to engage in practices designed to buffer themselves against the anxiety associated with that knowledge (Greenberg et al., 1986). Such "mortality salience," it is postulated, prompts defenses of one's "cultural worldview" in a way that other threats to the self (e.g., worrisome events, physical pain, social exclusion) do not (Greenberg, Solomon, & Arndt, 2007; Pyszczynski et al., this volume).

In arguing, among other things, that the ultimate purpose of self-esteem is its capacity to serve as a buffer against death anxiety, adherents of terror management theory both highlight the strengths and reveal the potential limitations of their approach. Although some limiting conditions have been cited (Jonas, Schimel, Greenberg, & Pyszczynski, 2002), the theory is offered as an explanation for everything from suntanning (Greenberg et al., 2007) to the terrorist attacks in the United States on 9/11/01 (Pyszczynski et al., 2006). But the long history emphasizing the contextual nature of social psychological phenomena tends to circumscribe such grand theorizing. While there well may be times when self-esteem bolstering behavior is rooted in concerns regarding death, efforts to enhance self-esteem can serve other purposes as well—for example, to confirm one's sense of social belonging (Leary, Tambor, Terdal, & Downs, 1995) or, as Greenberg (2008) acknowledges, to maximize one's potentialities and competencies.

Given the heralded reach of the theory, it is curious that, with a few exceptions (e.g., Jonas et al., 2002), TMT researchers have focused almost exclusively on negative behaviors (e.g., derogation of those who do not share one's cultural worldview) as their "dependent variables." To date, the limited number of published TMT studies demonstrating the "positive" consequences of mortality salience seem

to have required the introduction of additional manipulations, such as the invocation of "counteracting" values, to achieve their results (see Niesta, Fritsche, & Jonas, 2008). This despite the increases in generosity, commitment to future generations, etc., that so often seem to come from existential musings, recovery from serious illnesses, near-death experiences, and the like. Assessing the nature and scope of this provocative research topic may thus require researchers from additional areas—indeed, perhaps from the new tradition discussed next—to fill this gap in knowledge.

Positive Psychology

Begun in the past decade, positive psychology represents an attempt to promote empirically based research focused on human growth, strengths, and virtues, as opposed to the negative behaviors, judgmental shortcomings, and social pathologies emphasized in most research (Krueger & Funder, 2004; Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). Specific topics of inquiry include happiness, optimism, creativity, hope, gratitude, forgiveness, love, and other aspects of well-being (e.g., Gable & Haidt, 2005; Langer, 2002; Lyubomirsky, King, & Diener, 2005). For example, whereas accounts abound as to the origin and function of negative emotions, Fredrickson's (2001) "broaden and build" theory attempts to explain the putative roots and purpose of positive emotions, arguing that they serve to expand both thinking and social resources. Similarly, Gable, Gonzaga, and Strachman (2006) showed that the way romantic couples respond (or fail to respond) to positive developments in each other's lives offers a better predictor of the health and duration of the relationship than their reactions to negative events. The study of beneficial health consequences of positive emotions, relationships, and experiences (Keltner, 2009), not just the negative consequences of fear, stress, anxiety, and interpersonal conflicts, thus presents an exciting and productive focus for applied research.

There is little likelihood that emphasis on the sunny side of human functioning will gain as large a share of research activity as it does shelf space in the popular psychology section of our bookstores. Research on so-called negative topics is too important to our collective efforts to address important societal problems and generate insights relevant to normal human functioning (Ward, 2000). As is the case with so many topics, the future of positive psychology as a field of empirical research will no doubt depend upon the conjoint influence of societal priorities, funding availability, methodological advances, and above all the capacity of researchers to show and explain phenomena interesting and important enough to attract our best young minds.

Self-Regulation

Attendant with the general increase in research on the self has been a resurgence of concern with processes of self-regulation and control (Baumeister & Vohs, 2004) that have now been implicated in a wide range of applied problems, including educational achievement (Shoda, Mischel, & Peake, 1990) and health maintenance (Mann & Ward, 2007). Theories proposing two distinct motivational systems, one oriented toward approach and the other toward avoidance (Carver, Sutton, & Scheier, 2000; Gray, 1990), have been particularly influential. In regulatory focus theory (Higgins, 1998), for example, the concern is how an individual's desire to engage in promotion versus prevention behaviors "fits" goal-relevant tasks in the environment. Although such an orientation can theoretically be either personality-based or situationally induced, it is the interaction between a particular orientation and certain environmental variables that has produced especially interesting applied findings. For example, Mann, Sherman, and Updegraff (2004) applied a framing manipulation to a health message about dental flossing, emphasizing either gains to be had from enacting the behavior (e.g., healthy gums, fresh breath) or losses to be suffered from neglecting the behavior (e.g., unhealthy gums, bad breath). Individuals who reported a motivational style consistent with promotion behaviors flossed more in response to the gain-framed than the loss-framed message; those with a style characteristic of prevention behaviors showed the opposite pattern of responses.

A second prominent approach has been adopted by Baumeister and colleagues, who argue that exertions of self-control in one domain temporarily sap the capacity to engage in self-control in another domain. In their studies, individuals who engage in "ego-depleting" tasks (e.g., resisting chocolate chip cookies or making effortful choices between consumer items) have been found to desist more quickly in a second, unrelated self-control task (Baumeister, Vohs, & Tice, 2007). Questions remain as to the mechanisms underlying such diverse effects. One suggestion is that such tasks temporarily reduce blood glucose levels, resulting in subsequent impairments in self-regulation (Gailliot & Baumeister, 2007). Another possibility is that the initial task merely diminishes an individual's motivation to persevere at a subsequent task—a possibility supported by the fact that financial incentives appear to restore self-regulatory strength (Muraven & Slessareva, 2003).

Whatever the mechanism producing these lapses in self-control, as Baumeister et al. (2007) acknowledge, additional research is needed to understand how best to counteract such failures. Some promising results have been generated by research on *implementation intentions,* whereby individuals are encouraged to anticipate how best to shield goal pursuits from distracting influences (Gollwitzer & Sheeran, 2006). Likewise, activating a "high-level" construal of an event, focusing on global, superordinate features, as opposed to "low-level" construals focusing more on

specific, subordinate features, has also been found to facilitate successful self-control (Fujita, Trope, Liberman, & Levin-Sagi, 2006).

Hedonic Adaptation

In an important early study on hedonic adaptation, Brickman, Coates, and Janoff-Bulman (1978) had lottery winners, paralyzed accident victims, and control subjects assess their past, present, and future happiness. Although the results have sometimes been mischaracterized, and some methodological problems need to be acknowledged (e.g., more than a third of the accident victims failed to respond to some questions), the results made the study a classic. On average, the three groups did not differ in "how happy they expected to be in a couple of years," and while accident victims rated their present happiness levels as somewhat lower than did lottery winners, the latter did not differ from control group respondents. Moreover, even accident victims rated their present happiness levels as, on average, above the midpoint on the scale.

One suspects that the processes involved for these latter individuals (and the surprise of observers who imagine that they would be less able to achieve even a moderate level of life satisfaction) go beyond simple adaptation in the usual sense of the term. For example, most of the time the focus of attention of paralyzed individuals is not on their handicap but on the activity in which they are currently engaged. And many of those activities—savoring a good meal, watching a compelling film, enjoying the companionship of friends and loved ones—are no less pleasurable; indeed, for some individuals, they may be more pleasurable, because of that handicap. Conversely, lottery winners spend most of their time engaged in the same types of day-to-day tasks as the rest of us; and, unless their attention is focused on matters financial, a fat wallet or bank account does not enhance (and in fact may diminish) their experience of those tasks. But questions about precise mechanisms aside, the Brickman et al. study does provide compelling evidence of our tendency to adapt hedonically to both positive and negative circumstances.

Twenty years later, Gilbert and Wilson and their collaborators published the first in a series of elegant studies showing how individuals fail to anticipate the mechanisms and consequences of hedonic adaptation, and thus fare poorly in forecasting the affective experience that everyday events are likely to produce (Gilbert, Pinel, Wilson, Blumberg, & Wheatley, 1998; Wilson & Gilbert, 2003). This work has drawn on many sources, including Nisbett and Wilson's (1977) studies on the limits of introspection; work linking overconfident predictions to underappreciation of the vagaries of subjective construal (Griffin, Dunning, & Ross, 1990), and research on memory biases (Fredrickson & Kahneman, 1993). Its implications are unmistakable: Even

in the face of continual experiences of events not producing the degree of positivity or negativity they had expected, people continue to show levels of hope and anticipation (or fear and avoidance) that prove unwarranted.

More recently, Wilson and Gilbert (2008) have investigated the conditions under which hedonic or affective adaptation does or does not take place. They argue that the inability to understand and explain an emotion-producing event (as any academic who has had a manuscript turned down by a journal editor without a clear explanation for the rejection can attest) forestalls the adaptation process that otherwise would occur. Indeed, with respect to negative events, the predictions of the theory nicely dovetail with the finding that people who can make sense of traumatic events in their lives seem to recover better from the events than those who cannot (Davis, Nolen-Hoeksema, & Larson, 1998; Pennebaker, 1997; see also Kross, Ayduk, & Mischel, 2005). Interestingly, the theory also would seem to predict that *positive* events will lose some of their potency when they can be "explained away."

Close Relationships

Although the dynamics of interpersonal attraction have long been a topic of study in social psychology (e.g., Aronson & Linder, 1965; Berscheid, Dion, Walster, & Walster, 1971; Walster, Aronson, Abrahams, & Rottman, 1966), research exploring the long-term health of relationships between dating and married couples has only recently come into vogue (Clark & Lemay, volume 2). Much of that work employs methodologies associated more with traditional personality psychology than social psychology. Thus, in a typical study, couples might come to a laboratory for observations of their interaction style, and those measurements would then be correlated with responses from both members of the couple to various self-report surveys and/or to information culled from diary entries concerning their relationship over time, revealing associations between interaction style and relevant outcome measures (Aron & Aron, 1994; McNulty, O'Mara, & Karney, 2008). This methodology presents problems familiar to all correlational research, but it allows researchers to pose questions and explore relational factors that could never be investigated in studies probing the responses of undergraduate college students interacting for 30 minutes with strangers. Recent innovations also include an interesting hybrid methodology, a variant of "speed dating," whereby researchers use correlational methods to investigate "first-date" behavior between strangers seeking partners, who are brought together for a series of brief initial encounters (Finkel & Eastwick, 2008).

Despite the use of largely correlational methods, many contemporary studies of close relationships invoke concepts central to social cognition. For example, one influential program of research by Murray, Holmes, and Griffin

(1996a, 1996b) has extended earlier work by Taylor and Brown (1988) on *positive illusions* from the realm of individuals to that of couples, arguing that long-term relational satisfaction is most likely when the partners hold idealized views of each other. Rusbult et al. (2000) similarly found greatest relational endurance and satisfaction among partners who perceived themselves as superior to other couples. Although such correlational findings preclude causal conclusions, they parallel results from other domains suggesting that an inflated, even delusional sense of optimism and positivity is not only adaptive, but can also prove self-fulfilling (see Reed, Kemeny, Taylor, Wang, & Visscher, 1994).

Virtual Interaction

With the advent of email, the Internet, and related innovations in communication technology have come unprecedented opportunities for "virtual interaction" with individuals all over the world. Social networking sites like MySpace, Facebook, and Twitter have allowed people, particularly young people, to post and exchange information not only with intimate friends but also a network of acquaintances and in many cases strangers. Social psychologists have begun to explore the implications of such virtual interactions and related phenomena, examining, for example, egocentric perceptions when using email (e.g., Kruger, Epley, Parker, & Ng, 2005) and the tendency to anthropomorphize inanimate objects such as one's computer (Epley, Waytz, & Cacioppo, 2007; Harris & Fiske, 2008; Reis & Gosling, this volume).

With all its promise of uniting our global village, the ubiquity of computer-based communication has predictably prompted concerns that such virtual interactions are not a full substitute for actual human contact, in fact that excessive use of the Internet may be associated with decreases in well-being (Kraut et al., 1998; but see Gosling, Vazire, Srivastava, & John, 2004), at least among those already vulnerable to social isolation (Kraut et al., 2002). Such concerns, perhaps fueled also by highly publicized cases of ostracized youngsters carrying out murderous rampages against their classmates, have prompted researchers to begin exploring the effects of social isolation and exclusion, which have now been linked to aggression (Twenge, Baumeister, Tice, & Stucke, 2001) and which some liken to physical pain (MacDonald & Leary, 2005). Indeed, in one study, individuals undergoing a brain scan who were excluded by two other "virtual" interaction partners appeared to show activations in areas of the brain typically associated with pain (Eisenberger, Lieberman, & Williams, 2003).

While advances in computer and communication technology create new social concerns, they also provide researchers with new tools for the studying of social processes. Exploitation of increasingly realistic and immersive virtual environments, for example, raises questions about the once seemingly clear boundary between imagination and "real life" (Blascovich et al., 2002); at the same time, researchers can now explore phenomena that could not readily be pursued in face-to-face laboratory interactions. The opportunity to present complex stimuli to research participants and measure their behavioral responses, even as they remain immobile in order to permit the simultaneous recording of their brain activity, raises especially exciting possibilities. And there now exist unprecedented opportunities for the recording and analysis of the ongoing information-seeking and computer-based "social" interactions that occur as people conduct their lives in today's "digital" society.

Social Cognitive Neuroscience

Finally, like our colleagues elsewhere in psychology, social psychologists are increasingly taking advantage both of older technologies such as electroencephalography (EEG) and newer ones including positron emission tomography (PET) scanning, and, especially, functional magnetic resonance imagining (fMRI), in order to study, in vivo, brain activity accompanying and underlying behavioral responses (Cacioppo et al., 2007; Lieberman, this volume). Classic topics such as attitudes, attribution, stereotyping, motivation, and prejudice can now be explored though the lenses of neuroscience. In some cases, findings from such studies have served to buttress results from other domains of inquiry. For example, Phelps et al. (2000) found that amygdala activation, which has been implicated in fear responses, correlated with racial evaluations assessed by implicit measurement tools including the IAT. In other cases, neuroscientific evidence has been marshaled in support of theoretical conjectures originally derived from other sources, such as the distinction between controlled and automatic processes involved in attribution (Lieberman, Gaunt, Gilbert, & Trope, 2002).

In what may be its most promising use, neuroscientific data has also been employed to test specific social psychological hypotheses. Harris and Fiske (2006), for example, asked participants undergoing fMRI to look at photographs of individuals belonging to socially stereotyped groups (e.g., elderly, disabled, or wealthy individuals). Photos of groups who were low on both the dimensions of warmth and competence (i.e., homeless people and drug addicts) uniquely failed to trigger activation of the medial prefrontal cortex, a structure implicated in social cognition. Instead, activation patterns in response to members of those groups paralleled responses to depictions of objects rather than people—chilling evidence for the hypothesized dehumanization of these groups (Vaes, Paladino, Castelli, Leyens, & Giovanazzi, 2003).

SUCCESSFUL APPLICATIONS AND THE CHALLENGE OF "SCALING UP"

We conclude this chapter with some examples of applied or "intervention" research that demonstrate the relevance of social psychologists' work for practitioners, decision makers, and funders outside the field. Such examples should serve as a source of pride to those in our field who are still inspired by George Miller's (1969) clarion call to "give psychology away." Increasingly, such work reflects not only the experience- and tradition-based wisdom of practitioners but also the application of mainstream theory, old as well as new, in social psychology.

One longstanding insight relates to the folly of assuming that well-designed interventions will inevitably produce positive outcomes. Unanticipated and undesirable consequences of seemingly straightforward interventions may occur for many reasons, including the possibility (noted prominently in Lewin's field theory formulations) that the removal of previously operative forces and constraints may reveal and alter the dynamics of existing institutions and relationships that had previously served important functions. (See Ross & Nisbett, 1991, pp. 208–216, for accounts of the Cambridge-Somerville project that was designed to serve Depression-era youth deemed to be at high risk for crime and delinquency but that proved, if anything, to be counterproductive; also the Seattle-Denver "guaranteed income" pilot project, which increased rather than decreased rates of marital dissolution; and other disappointing intervention results.)

At the same time, experience teaches us that intervention success can sometimes prove *easier* to achieve than expected because of so-called "Hawthorne" effects (Mayo, 1933, 1945; Roethlisberger, 1941)[8] or other factors that make participants in intervention experiments strive to produce results welcome to the experimenter (Rosenzweig, 1933). In fact, unpredictability of outcomes is one of the reasons why even those social psychologists who are most

sympathetic to the goals of a project generally advocate the use of formal evaluation designs, with appropriate control and comparison groups, objective outcome measures, and exploration of the subjective experiences of those affected by the intervention.

Another old Lewinian insight involves the strategy of achieving change by removing rather than adding forces to an existing tension system—that is, instead of relying on positive and negative incentives (which can add "tension" to a system), it may be more useful to determine what impediments or barriers stand in the way of achieving change, and then eliminate or at least reduce them. Barriers involving unhelpful group norms and pressures were generally the ones emphasized in the applied Lewinian tradition. However, the insight is a very general one. The first step in designing a program to produce change is to analyze the sources of individual and/or collective resistance to such change; and this analysis should include not just "social" and "psychological" barriers but also situational and structural factors. Thus, failure of unemployed youth to utilize a job training program may reflect negative group norms and past experiences, but it may also reflect unrecognized financial costs or other disincentives, or even the lack of convenient public transportation to the training site.

Some of the newer insights involve application of principles derived from dissonance, self-perception, attribution, and prospect theory. But others reflect advances in evaluation methods. In particular, researchers have increasingly come to recognize the value of measures that directly or indirectly assess the processes assumed to produce change. We are referring here less to the use of complex statistical analyses to tease apart a number of different possible mediating variables than to the simpler task of finding out whether an intervention did in fact change some factor or process that the program designers thought in need of address, and whether that change in process was associated with positive outcomes. For example, in evaluating a program designed to improve academic performance by increasing students' sense of "belonging" (Walton & Cohen, 2007), it is important not only to determine whether students' grades improved but also to determine both whether the intervention did in fact increase the students' sense of belonging and whether the students whose grades improved the most were those whose sense of belonging increased the most, and vice versa.

Throughout this chapter, we have documented both early and contemporary instances of "mainstream" laboratory-based social psychological research with important implications for potential intervention. The past 40 years have also seen the growth of a tradition in social psychology with a more explicit and extensive emphasis on applied work—one recognized with the publication of the first issue

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[8] It should be noted that later critics, such as Bramel and Friend (1981) challenged and indeed "debunked" traditional secondary accounts of increased worker productivity as a simple response to attention and awareness of being in a study. These critics pointed out, among other things, that the Depression-era participants in the study were made aware that increased productivity in response to the relevant changes in working conditions, even unwelcome ones, was a not only a goal but perhaps a requirement if they were to retain their jobs and later achieve better conditions. But the larger point—that the targets of research actively interpret their circumstances and respond to what they believe will be the consequences of their actions— is uncontestable.

of the *Journal of Applied Social Psychology* in 1971 and the subsequent opening of a number of graduate programs specifically devoted to training students in applied methodology (Schneider, Gruman, & Coutts, 2005). A related enterprise involves the significant contributions made by social psychologists to the study of topics relevant to the legal system. As discussed earlier, their investigations have exposed the potential unreliability of memories for events, eyewitness identifications of criminal suspects, and even confessions offered by those in police custody. They have also shed light on the group dynamics of jury deliberations and the cognitive and motivational biases that reveal themselves when citizens are called to render verdicts, including, notably, decisions in potential capital punishment cases (for a review of this large and important area of applied research, see Kovera & Borgida, volume 2).

We can also cite instances in which mainstream theorists skilled in the art of the laboratory experiment have ventured outside the bounds of academia and engaged in direct interventions in applied settings—particularly in the domains of health, education, and environmental conservation. Many of these social psychologists have followed the Lewinian tradition of bringing rigorous theory to bear on significant real-world problems. For example, Aronson and his colleagues have employed dissonance-inducing "hypocrisy" techniques to both enhance safer sexual practices among young adults and promote water conservation (Dickerson, Thibodeau, Aronson, & Miller, 1992; Stone, Aronson, Crain, Winslow, & Fried, 1994). In these interventions, participants were induced to make public statements strongly endorsing behaviors (e.g., using condoms, taking short showers) just after having been made aware that their own behavior in such regards has been less than exemplary. Participants thus motivated to reduce the resulting state of dissonance subsequently engaged in more of the behavior that they had "hypocritically" advocated. Aronson also pioneered the *jigsaw classroom* technique, whereby students cooperatively provide each other with pieces of information they require to finish their projects (Aronson, Blaney, Stephin, Sikes, & Snapp, 1978; Aronson & Patnoe, 1997)—a technique shown to reduce racial tension and enhance scholastic performance (Aronson, 1990). Similar techniques have been advocated to reduce the threat of school violence at the hands of socially rejected students (Aronson, 2000).

Other social psychologists well known for both their experimental and applied work have made important contributions in the field of health (Taylor, 2008). Salovey, Rothman, and colleagues have successfully used framing techniques to tailor messages to enhance health-promoting behaviors (Banks et al. 1995, Detweiler, Bedell, Salovey, Pronin, & Rothman, 1999; Rothman & Salovey, 1997; Rothman, Salovey, Antone, & Keough, 1993; see also Parent,

Ward, & Mann, 2007). The finding by Dal Cin et al. (2006) that self-reported condom use in response to a safe-sex message was doubled when that message was accompanied by a "reminder" bracelet is particularly noteworthy. It is also reminiscent of the much earlier finding by Leventhal, Singer, and Jones (1965) that combining a persuasive communication with a simple "channel factor" manipulation (e.g., providing students with a campus map with the university health center circled and asking them to find a convenient time to visit it) produced an eightfold increase in tetanus inoculations over the very low rate achieved with the communication alone. Important advances have also been made in the areas of smoking reduction (Strahan et al., 2002; Westling, Mann, & Ward, 2006), and combating underage drinking. In the latter case, Schroeder and Prentice (1998) produced a 40% reduction in alcohol consumption among research participants simply by countering the prevailing pluralistic ignorance on the Princeton campus about the relevant social norms.

In more recent work in the realm of education, Claude Steele and his associates applied the valuable lessons learned in research on both self-affirmation and stereotype threat to design the "21st Century Program" at the University of Michigan. The program, which included a challenging curriculum modeled after the pioneering work of University of California, Berkeley, mathematics professor Uri Triesman, admitted ethnic majority and minority students in an "honorific" fashion, avoiding the stigmatizing labels associated with most remediation programs, and explicitly affirming to students their potential for success. The promising results of this intervention and related ones are described by Steele (2010). Others, working within this same theoretical framework, have shown the power of short-term interventions affirming students' sense of self-worth (Cohen, Garcia, Apfel, & Master, 2006), or, as alluded to earlier, belongingness (Walton & Cohen, 2007) to enhance school achievement.

These and many other successful interventions, including those by particularly skilled and dedicated classroom teachers and administrators whose use of sound social psychological principles (as well as sound educational principles and a lot of hard work) might be more instinctive and less formal, add to a growing body of social and developmental psychology literature that suggests that academic performance, and indeed intelligence itself, is anything but fixed (J. Aronson, Fried, & Good, 2002; Diamond, Barnett, Thomas, & Munro, 2007; Jaeggi, Buschkuehl, Jonides, & Perrig, 2008; Rueda, Rothbart, McCandliss, Saccomanno, & Posner, 2005). In one powerful illustration, Blackwell, Trzesniewsk, and Dweck (2007) showed that persuading junior high school students that intelligence is malleable was associated with a reversal of the downward trajectory in grades shown by their peers

over the same time period (see Schwartz, 1997; see also Nisbett (2009) for an illuminating discussion of successes and disappointments in preschool, primary school, and high-school intervention projects, with a particular emphasis on contributions by social psychologists).

The conclusion supported by such research efforts is worth underscoring. We now have solid "existence proofs" of the possibility of helping disadvantaged students greatly narrow the achievement gap separating them from more advantaged students through wise educational and social psychological interventions. At the same time, it must be acknowledged that many of the hopeful claims of educators about ways to close the gap through better physical plants, smaller class sizes, more stringent education requirements for teachers, or greater racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic diversity, have not been supported by the data from rigorous evaluation research (although in the case of class size, the issue is really one of cost-effectiveness, since the benefits, though small, seem to be well-documented).

In a number of settings, Robert Cialdini and his collaborators have harnessed the power of classic social-psychological techniques, most notably the use of "social proof" or messages about group norms, to address environmental concerns. For example, in one study, in which the outcome measure was reuse of hotel towels that are otherwise replaced daily, they showed that pairing a standard pro-environmental message with norm information (i.e., "75% of guests participate in our new resource savings program") proved significantly more effective than other potentially persuasive messages that omitted such information (Goldstein, Cialdini, & Griskevicius, 2008). Cialdini and company have similarly used influence techniques involving norms and norm violations to reduce littering (Cialdini, Reno, & Kallgren, 1990) and power consumption (Schultz, Nolan, Cialdini, Goldstein, & Griskevicius, 2007), and they have also pointed out that admonishing messages about the putative dire consequences stemming from the high frequency of norm violation can have the perverse effect of making such violations seem more socially acceptable.

The success of these types of small and medium scale intervention projects, and increasing recognition by researchers and government officials alike of three important facts, set the stage for the scaling-up problem to which we now turn. First, inside or outside of academia, and regardless of general political conviction, few would disagree that individual and collective problems of behavior lie at the heart of the most difficult social issues burdening our society (specifically, the interrelated complex of factors at the root of minority and underclass academic under-achievement, homelessness, high unemployment, absent fathers, drug abuse, high incarceration rates, etc.). Second,

few could dispute that a half century of work in social psychology and related fields has armed us with an impressive collection of potential tools for changing behavior. Some of these intervention tools entail changes in social and situational pressures and constraints; others entail changes in perceptions or "definitions" of situations and/or intervention efforts. Finally, as many have documented, positive intervention outcomes are not only possible but a matter of proven fact.

Even in the domain of education, as we have just noted, successful small-scale interventions with disadvantaged students who face a daunting array of personal and situational challenges have been demonstrated. These success stories are important because of the specific lessons they offer practitioners both about techniques of instruction and about the social and social psychological factors that are necessary to make educational efforts more fruitful for more students. But they perhaps are even more important insofar as they challenge both conservative pessimism about the educability of such children and the equally pessimistic radical claim that real progress—in the absence of huge "structural" change in society—is impossible.

What remains to be proven is our capacity to move from successful small, one-site interventions to achieve similar success in the kind of district-wide, city-wide, statewide or nationwide programs that would really make a difference in American society. Some of the challenges of such "scaling up" are financial and logistic (finding and training additional skilled, dedicated teachers and aides to implement new practices); some are political (gaining cooperation of teachers' unions and administrators reluctant to accept the input of "outsiders"), and some are psychological (replicating the sense of mission on the part of program providers, and the sense of specialness, belonging, and privilege on the part of students). Some relate to features of small programs that necessarily could not be replicated in system-wide contexts (for example, the ability to exclude especially problematic students or uncooperative parents, or the requirement that parents and students alike invest substantial amounts of time and energy to get into, and to stay in, the program). Research to determine which of these features matter most and devising ways to replicate these features in large-scale programs or, where necessary, to compensate for their absence, remains a vital applied undertaking.

While these challenges are daunting, we should remember that we have some lessons from the history of applied research and the evaluation of natural experiments resulting from changes in social policy to guide us. For example, the real lessons of the Hawthorne effect studies (and studies of demand characteristics and confirmation biases more generally), those of studies attesting to the effects of behavioral commitment, and above all the consistent

message from studies on the importance of perceived norms, remind us of the unique factors that may be at play when dedicated professionals apply their skills in small-scale or medium scale intervention studies. Some of these factors may be difficult to duplicate on the massive scale required to make a difference in society at large, although they should not be ignored; others (for example, creating a sense of belongingness, making use of mentors and role models, and clearly communicating to students the message that success is indeed achievable for them, that abilities are malleable, and that persistent effort pays off) readily can be addressed.

Moreover, lessons from the laboratory and observation of real-world events also help us appreciate factors that may make it *easier,* in fact *necessary,* to intervene on a large scale rather than a small one—factors involving not only economies of scale but also channel factors, the communication of social norms or "default" choices (as in the "opt-in" vs. "opt-out" studies), and the effects of mass media role-models, which we have been investigating for many decades. A striking example relevant not to education but to environmentalism makes this point. Consider the enormous increase over the last two or three decades in the practice of recycling various materials that once clogged our refuse dumps and (if burned or buried) were a source of ground, air, and water pollution. Thirty years ago, this practice, at least in urban and suburban America, was largely restricted to a small, socially conscious, largely liberal elite who duly separated the relevant materials and took them in their cars to neighborhood or district recycling centers, from which they were transported to larger centers for processing. Today, in many towns and cities, placing recyclable products into a single large container (left, not incidentally, in public view), which is emptied in large trucks on trash-collection days, is a standard practice rather than an expression of social and political values. Indeed, *not* recycling constitutes a deviant act, an act at odds with civic virtue, something akin to not shoveling snow or raking the leaves in front of one's home, or (in some communities at least) not joining the PTA when asked to do so on the first day of school.

The virtuous cycle is clear—changes in practice make compliance easier, ease increases the rate of compliance, the increased rate of compliance make non-compliance deviant and therefore unacceptable to self and others. As Festinger and Bem could tell us, something is undoubtedly lost in this virtuous cycle. When compliance becomes easy and expected, the actions in question no longer become a motive for internalization of values or a cue for personal identity. But society as a whole benefits—and social psychologists in the Lewinian tradition can shift their energies to other strategies for transforming social beliefs and practices

in ways that serve the greater good. Norms, of course, are not communicated solely through policies and practices. As social psychologists have long recognized, the media can play a role as well. It is said that when Clark Gable removed his shirt to reveal a bare chest in the romantic comedy *It Happened One Night,* canny undershirt manufacturers recognized that trouble lay ahead.

Today, all over the world, *telenovenas* and radio daytime dramas are being used by human rights and women's rights activists, who make effective use of fictional role models to motivate and guide women to protect their own health, safety, and dignity, and that of their children (Bandura, 2006; Rogers et al., 1999). This intervention has its roots in work that was begun over half a century ago by Albert Bandura (Bandura & Huston, 1961) showing the ways in which children learn from, and imitate, the positive and negative behavior of social "models," and it skillfully applies the social learning theory principles that Bandura developed and shared with the world (Bandura, 1977b). In a society where so many problems remain, and in a world beset by so much conflict and so much need, the challenge to younger researchers to learn from, and imitate the successful models of intervention reviewed here could not be clearer.

Robert F. Kennedy, who in many ways represented a standard-bearer for his generation's interventionist spirit, eloquently posed this challenge in two famous quotations. The first, distinctly Lewinian in its plea to look beyond conventional models of change and identify and address barriers to societal transformation, was paraphrased from the Irish playwright George Bernard Shaw: *"There are those who look at things the way they are, and ask why. I dream of things that never were, and ask why not."* The second offers a boost to the collective self-efficacy of our field: *"Few will have the greatness to bend history itself; but each of us can work to change a small portion of events, and in the total of all those acts will be written the history of this generation."* We can think of no more appropriate message with which to end this chapter.

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