A PROBLEM OF COSMIC PROPORTIONS: FLOYD HENRY ALLPORT AND THE
CONCEPT OF COLLECTIVITY IN AMERICAN SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY

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Abstract

Floyd Henry Allport (1890-1978) is widely regarded as a significant figure in the establishment of experimental social psychology in the United States in the early twentieth century. His famous 1924 textbook and his early experimental work helped set the stage for a social psychology characterized by individualism, behaviorism, and experiment. Allport is particularly well-known for his banishment of the group concept from social psychology and his argument that the individual is the only viable, scientific object of study for the serious social psychologist. This early part of Allport's career and the role it played in establishing American social psychology is relatively well documented. However, there is little scholarship regarding Allport's work after the 1920s. An examination of this time period demonstrates that Allport's earliest individualism was in fact rather short-lived, as he subjected it to serious revision in the early decades of the twentieth century. The increasing complexity of the bureaucratic structure of American society in the early 1900s, the economic collapse of the 1930s, and the onset of the Second World War were significant events in the development of Allport's ideas regarding the individual. While his early work is marked by a concerted effort to create an ideal science for understanding the individual and the social, his later work was much more concerned with the social implications of individualism and collectivism. As the social world around him grew more complex, so too did his own social psychology, culminating in a significant change in Allport's philosophy of science. These findings contribute to our understanding of social psychology and its history by: providing a novel view of one of social psychology's central historical figures; demonstrating the difficult, persistent, and context-dependent nature of the individualism-collectivism divide in American social psychology; and providing a platform for thinking about the ways in which historians remember and write the stories of important figures in the field.

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Table of Contents

Preface

As an undergraduate student in my first social psychology class, I recall learning about Floyd Henry Allport and the important role he played in establishing social psychology in North America. I do not recall the exact textbook that introduced me to him, but I do recall its tone and content. Allport was described as the father of experimental social psychology, the man who ingeniously demonstrated that the subject matter of social psychology could be studied using experimental methods. Prior to Allport's groundbreaking work, the author noted, the field simply did not exist; the kinds of topics we now explore in social psychology were explored by armchair philosophers. For a young student enamored with the impressive and seemingly highly relevant experimental findings of the field—the Hawthorne effect, cognitive dissonance, Milgram's obedience studies—Floyd Allport seemed an excellent and most worthy ancestor.

As I moved through my education, encountering social psychology again and again—first in advanced undergraduate seminars, and later in the context of graduate coursework and thesis writing—this view of Allport became increasingly complicated. It seemed that many contemporary social psychologists had little to say about Allport, nominating Kurt Lewin or Leon Festinger instead as the progenitor of their practice. I recall browsing *The Heart of Social Psychology*, a book that—according to its subtitle—offered a "backstage view of a passionate science" (Aron & Aron, 1986). I was surprised to find that Allport played but a bit part in that narrative and, in fact, the authors did not seem to look very kindly on his contributions. As I began to study the history of social psychology more intensely, the situation became even more convoluted. These narratives gave me a view of Allport as a stubborn scientist that stifled our understanding of the very thing that is presumably at the heart of the discipline: the social nature of everyday life. These narratives provided me with simultaneous and seemingly incompatible

images of Allport as being heroic, insignificant, and villainous. Furthermore, I found the same kind of variety in definitions of social psychology itself. For some, the field was the study of the individual; for others it was the study of society. And what's more, the stories that people told about the discipline and about Allport's place in it seemed directly related to their definitions of and ideals related to social psychology. It is in this context that I began to explore the life and work of Allport in an attempt to understand his contributions to social psychology and his own vision for the field on which I myself have become so focused. My intention was to discern which of these characterizations was most apt for this founding father, which best described his actual and intended contributions to the field. As seems so often the case in the writing of history, what emerged instead was an even more complex picture of Allport. The Allport that I found in the primary literature and the archives defied the singular characterization that I was seeking. Examining his early years, I found an audacious young scholar whose work was timely and well-suited to its social context. Examining his postgraduate years, I found a scientist and citizen struggling to make sense of the vast social and political changes around him, seeking ways to use his science for social change. Finally, examining his later work, I found a troubled and careful scientist and philosopher reevaluating his own work and struggling with a particularly stubborn subject matter that seemed to resist scientific examination. The narrative that follows is an attempt to add to our historical understanding of the field by providing a look at all of these aspects of Allport's work: heroic, inconsequential, villainous, and otherwise.

Introduction

Throughout the latter half of the nineteenth century and continuing throughout the early years of the twentieth century, social scientists began to consider the direction that the nascent discipline of social psychology would take. Would it be a sociological or a psychological discipline (Baldwin, 1897a; Giddings, 1899; Tosti, 1898; Tufts, 1897a)? Would it be a social or a natural science (Tufts, 1897b)? Would it study society or socialized individuals (Baldwin, 1897a; Ellwood, 1899a; Tufts, 1895)? At the turn of the century, these questions were still highly contentious (e.g., Ellwood, 1908a; Hart, 1912; Mead, 1909; Ross, 1910), and the future of social psychology remained uncertain.

Many contemporary historians suggest that this uncertainty came to a halt in 1924 with the work of one social psychologist: Floyd Henry Allport (Graumann, 1986; Greenwood, 2000, 2004). In the early decades of the twentieth century, Floyd Allport (1890-1978) became the leading and most outspoken figure in a movement to render American social psychology a scientific, experimental discipline rooted in the principles and methods of general laboratory psychology. Allport's work was central in the displacement of philosophical and sociological understandings of the social that had been prominent in the early 1900s in both the United States and Europe. In addition to influencing the theoretical and philosophical shape of the field, Allport also influenced the subject matter and methods of social psychology in this period through his substantive research: he was one of the first to demonstrate the possibility of manipulating and measuring social behaviors in a laboratory setting (Allport, 1920b). He was also the editor of the *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology*, one of the first journals devoted to social-psychological topics. He published prolifically in both academic journals and popular magazines for over fifty years, addressing a multitude of topics, including conformity

(1934), delinquency (1931a), customs (1939a), public opinion (1937), political institutions (1933), and wartime morale (Allport & Lepkin, 1943). He is best known, however, for writing one of the first comprehensive textbooks on experimental social psychology (Allport, 1924a), a text that has been cited more than 500 times over the last five decades.[1] Indeed, he is a central and important figure in the history of American social psychology and is considered by many to be the father or founder of the field (Collier, Minton, & Reynolds, 1991; Katz, Johnson, & Nichols, 1998).

Historians have indeed grasped Allport's significance in the field and the scholarly literature includes a number of discussions focused on his role in the founding and development of American social psychology. Most historians of social psychology agree that in many ways, Allport's early work signaled the beginning of a new chapter in the history of social psychology (Graumann, 1988; Greenwood, 2004; Morawski, 1986; Post, 1980). This new approach, they argue, severed social psychology from its sociological origins and placed it firmly within the realm of an individualistic, experimental psychology. While many authors rightly point out that the turn towards experimentalism in social psychology was indeed part of a larger revolt against social philosophy, they point to Allport's work as a cornerstone in the success of this revolt. Individualism, experimentalism, and scientism were "in the air" and Allport's work served to successfully ground social psychology in the scientific ideals of the day. With only a handful of exceptions (Aron & Aron, 1986; Jackson, 1988), this estimation of Allport's impact has been consistent across historical accounts.

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[1]A Web of Science citation search turned up over 500 results; this is likely a gross underestimation. According to an analysis by Collier, Minton, & Reynolds (1991), Allport was among the ten people most frequently cited by psychological textbook authors from the period of 1908 to 1953. From the period of 1930 to 1942, Allport was the number one cited author among both psychological and sociological textbook authors.

The Hero and the Villain: Allport in the History of Social Psychology

Despite general agreement regarding Allport's importance in the founding and development of social psychology, our knowledge of Allport and his work is still rather sparse. There is no biography of Allport, nor is there a book-length work that explores his social psychology specifically. What we find instead is a substantial body of periodical literature that explores his role in the history of the field and debates whether the approach he heralded was beneficial or detrimental to the discipline's development. While these narratives provide insight into Floyd Allport's career, their focus on his role in the discipline's development does not provide a comprehensive narrative of his work. Furthermore, they provide very divergent portraits of Allport and his role in the history of social psychology: while many authors present Allport's approach as constituting the impetus to a strong, unified, scientific social psychology, others present it as the beginning of a slow descent into a rigid, asocial, and atheoretical social psychology. It is in this way that two portrayals of Allport have arisen in the literature: the "Allport-as-hero" story and the "Allport-as-villain" story.

Allport as Hero

The "Allport-as-hero" story represents a classic example of celebratory history. Such accounts first place Allport firmly within an individualistic, experimental framework, and then applaud the effects of such a framework on the development of social psychology. One of the clearest examples of such an approach is an assessment of Allport that was written shortly after his death (Post, 1980). In this account, Allport's career is described as "one of the most important and innovative careers in contemporary psychology" (Post, 1980, p. 369). According to Post, Allport's work came along when the direction of social psychology was largely

uncertain; Allport is therefore described as standing "at the crossroads of two traditions" (p. 369). One senses that the discipline could have and perhaps would have developed quite differently if Allport had not come forward to free social psychology of its sociological origins.

Yet, there is also an element of the *Zeitgeist* approach in Post's account; the discipline is portrayed as being "ready" for Allport:

> In their eagerness to articulate the issues and problems, the early social psychologists had relied on concepts ill-suited to a social theory. Bloated and stretched beyond recognition, group mind and instinct began to topple under their own weight. Social psychology was ready for a new start. (Post, 1980, p. 370)

The reader is thus left with the sense that social psychologists had begun to recognize the "errors" of their past, yet did not see a new way in which to move forward. Allport's ingenuity therefore lay in his creation of a viable alternative for the discipline.

There is perhaps no greater example of a celebratory history than Daniel Katz's (1968; Katz, Johnson, & Nichols, 1998) written recollections of Allport. Katz was one of Allport's first graduate students at Syracuse University and much of his work bears the imprint of Allport's influence (cf, Katz & Cantril, 1940; Katz & Schanck, 1938). Katz (1968) describes Allport as "the leader and the prophet"(p. 273) and in a later article argues that Allport's work not only "defined a field of study" but also anticipated a multitude of important social-psychological constructs including social-cognitive biases, reference groups, attitudes, the authoritarian personality, cardinal traits, and self-schemas (Katz, Johnson, & Nichols, 1998). Given these anticipations, Allport is described as "considerably ahead of his time" (1998, p. 135). After outlining Allport's service to the science of social psychology, Katz reminds the reader that the field still has much to learn from its founder: "In 1924, Floyd Allport's voice was crying in the

wilderness. Now, three quarters of a century later, some of the foolishness that Allport criticized is still with us…and that voice still deserves to be heard" (p. 140). Interestingly, Katz portrays Allport as being not only ahead of his contemporaries, but also ahead of his successors.

Similar hero accounts are evident in the work of many other scholars. Murphy and Kovach (1972) describe Allport's dissertation work on social facilitation as the starting point for experimental social psychology and state that this early work "demonstrated the revolutionary implications of the experimental method for the study of group behavior" (p. 446). They note that the "Allport formulation" dominated social psychology in the early years. Jones (1985) credits Allport, and particularly his 1924 text, with aiding in the establishment of the field "on an objective, experimental basis" (p. 376). He also establishes historical continuity between Allport and contemporary social psychology, stating that the 1924 text has a "surprising ring of modernity" (p. 376). Indeed, most textbook histories endorse these exact types of assessments.

The accounts written by Post (1980), Katz (1968, 1998), and Murphy and Kovach (1972) clearly portray Allport as having played a central role in the development of social psychology. Furthermore, they represent Allport as having provided a desirable and much-needed direction to what was, up to that point, considered an uncertain and unscientific discipline. By liberating social psychology from social philosophy and sociology, Allport furnished the discipline with a unique subject matter, a credible approach, and perhaps most importantly, a scientific methodology. In the "Allport-as-hero" story, these contributions secure Allport's position as the founder of modern social psychology.

Allport as Villain

In recent years, the "Allport-as-hero" story has been challenged by a growing number of historians who have begun to reevaluate Allport's role in the development of social psychology.

These authors do not dispute Allport's experimentalism, his individualism, or his influence on the discipline; rather, they question whether his ideas have been beneficial for modern social psychology. Graumann (1988) states that "it definitely happened that, in the view and work of one of the first modern American social psychologists, F. H. Allport…the individualist conception coincided and coalesced with a methodological orientation, the experimental-behavioral approach" (p. 13). Graumann (1986) argues that this orientation led to the simultaneous "individualization of the social" and the "desocialization of the individual." Similarly, Greenwood (2000) argues that Allport "played a major role in reshaping the development of American social psychology" (p. 447) and that Allport's individualism found a lasting home in the discipline as "later generations of social psychologists came to follow Floyd Allport in denying that there could be a social psychology distinct from individual psychology" (p. 446). Like Graumann (1986, 1988), Greenwood (2004) attributes the individualistic orientation of contemporary social psychology to the work of Floyd Allport: "The social dimensions of cognition, emotion, and behavior were rejected along with the supposed metaphysical extravagancies of the 'group mind,' largely as a result of the polemics of Floyd Allport" (p. 447). Morawski (1986) similarly holds Allport responsible for eradicating the social in social psychology and consequently "pre-empt[ing] an understanding of the experience and structure of interactions" (p. 59). In contrast to the hero story, where Allport is portrayed as the progenitor of a new and successful approach to the study of the social realm, the villain story portrays Allport as a rigid and unyielding spokesman of a misguided approach to social-psychological science.

Allport in Context

These two narratives of Allport's place in the history of social psychology initially appear quite disparate. Yet, these accounts are not quite as different as they seem insofar as they part ways only in their valuations of Allport's contributions to the discipline. Both accounts view Allport's work as rooted in individualism, scientism, experimentalism, and reductionism. Both argue that Allport's steadfast commitment to these positions was what set him apart from his contemporaries and ultimately led to his success in altering the course of the discipline. The narratives therefore coalesce in their accounts of Allport's views of social psychology and his impact on the discipline; where they differ is in their valuations of those views and their outlooks regarding the benefits and detriments of Allportian individualism for American social psychology.

Some authors, however, have presented a more tempered account of Allport's views. Brooks and Johnson (1978) note that the individualism-collectivism controversy was prevalent for Allport throughout his entire career; his early individualism, they argue, was short-lived. As early as 1931, "Allport was no longer denying a role for a social science of groups, and indeed, was beginning to put problem ahead of method in his search for a legitimate way to approach supra-individual phenomena" (p. 301). This shift gained momentum throughout the remainder of Allport's career, culminating in his turn towards a grand theory that attempted to capture the complexity of collective constructs. Unfortunately, Brooks and Johnson do not elaborate on the theory, but their analysis suggests that Allport's approach to social psychology was much more complicated than the historical record indicates.

Two other accounts, those of Parkovnick (2000) and Samelson (2000), directly challenge the ways in which historians have portrayed Allport, his impact on the discipline, and his commitment to individualism and experimentalism. In a discussion of Allport's 1924 text,

Parkovnick (2000) points out that historical accounts of Allport have been skewed to substantiate particular historical claims. He argues that celebratory accounts have overstated Allport's influence; Allport was one among many scholars attempting to establish a scientific social psychology. Celebratory accounts, however, have at least been successful in covering all of the aspects of Allport's approach, while "recent historical writing tends to be more narrowly focused, addressing only two planks, science…and methodological individualism" (p. 438). As Parkovnick rightly notes, such accounts "narrow and distort Allport's program for social psychology and impoverish discussions regarding the nature of social psychology" (p. 438). Contemporary histories, Parkovnick argues, are plagued by presentism, which leads to "the narrowed version presented in recent retrospective accounts of Floyd Allport's program for social psychology" (p. 438).

One of the most compelling accounts of the complexity of Allport's role in the history of social psychology was offered by Samelson (2000). Samelson is one of the few authors to suggest that while Allport was perhaps incorrectly identified as the hero of social psychology in earlier histories, he is now incorrectly being identified as the villain in the context of more contemporary histories. Samelson aptly describes this latter presentation as a game of "pin the tail on the donkey" and points out that our conception of Allport as the archenemy of a genuinely *social* social psychology "may be based on a presentist reading of selected quotes from some of his earlier writings" (p. 502). Such selective history attempts to counteract Whig history, but falls prey to the very same errors. Thus, it becomes simply another version of Whig history. In this vein, Samelson (2000) writes:

> [T]he tale is a presentist tale with inverted valuations (from good, progress, success, to bad, regress, failure) but still with the retrospective errors of oversimplification of

process, neglect of context, misinterpretation, anachronism. Floyd Allport was morphed

from a pioneer trying out a new approach into the Pied Piper of destructive experimental

methodology and asocial, individualistic social psychology. (p. 504)

Samelson argues that this oversimplification conceals the complexity of Allport's social

psychology and he recommends a more comprehensive account of Allport that aims neither to

celebrate nor denigrate, but rather to document, Allport's social psychology and its role in the

larger development of the discipline.

<div align="center">Reconstructing Allport</div>

The present work explores these gaps so aptly noted by both Samelson and Parkovnick in

an attempt to provide a richer, more contextualized narrative of the life and work of Floyd

Allport and his place in the history of American social psychology. What constitutes a richer

narrative? The present work provides an account that: extends the history of Allport beyond

1924; pays careful attention to the social context of the individualism-collectivism debate in

American social psychology; enriches the intellectual context by moving beyond behaviorism

and experimentalism and; provides a more concrete, localized history of the individualism-

collectivism debate as it played out for one significant figure in the field. Such an account has

much to tell us about Floyd Allport, the history of social psychology, and our current

historiographical approaches to tracing that history.

Beyond 1924

The existing literature on Allport's work tends to focus heavily on the early years of his

career when he published his influential text, *Social Psychology*. While this time frame is

undoubtedly an important one, it actually represents a very small portion of his life's work.

Allport continued to publish well into the second half of the twentieth century and he continued

to conduct theoretical work right up until the time of his death. To some extent, historians have had good reason to disregard Allport's later work. It was undoubtedly less influential than his 1924 text and therefore may be deemed less important for a disciplinary history. It is, however, central to a history of Allport as well as a history of attempts to understand sociality—something that has been at the very heart of social psychology since its founding. Understanding the outcome and development of Allport's early individualism provides us with a significantly altered view of this "founding father." It also encourages discussion and exploration of social psychology's past and present theoretical orientation towards some of its most central concepts: collectivity, sociality, and the socialized individual.

Allport's theoretical work during the second half of the twentieth century demonstrates the difficulties of an individualistic and reductionist approach to social psychology. Furthermore, his work during the 1930s and 1940s demonstrates the political nature of his individualistic approach and because of this, it sheds light on the ideological context of this debate in twentieth-century American psychology. Finally, this later work also uncovers an interesting and important aspect of Allport's work: the so-called father of experimental social psychology conducted very few experiments; in fact, a significant portion of his career was spent concentrating on theoretical work. Even more surprising is the fact that his withdrawal from experimentation was precipitated by a growing discomfort with the kinds of mechanical causality that he once championed as the proper foundation of the field. Understanding these later developments helps us to see that the discipline adopted some but not all aspects of Allport's social psychology, a nuance that is missed by historians who concentrate only on Allport's earliest ideas and contributions.

Allportian Individualism in Social Context.

Scholars have generally attributed the individualistic nature of American social psychology to the rise of the experimental paradigm in general psychology; it is difficult to study group-level concepts in the laboratory, but it is comparatively easy to study inter-individual influence. This is definitely true, but it is only part of the picture; the problem of the individual and the collective was not confined to academic circles. Reconstructing the social context of Allport's work demonstrates that Allport's individualism rested on his beliefs about science and objectivity as well as on his beliefs about the actual and ideal structure of American society. His distaste for institutions was rooted in ideas about what constitutes an empirical object of study, but it was also influenced by his wariness of an increasingly corporate society. His research on patriotism during the Second World War was an attempt at recasting sociological "abstractions" in a psychological, experimental framework, but it was also an attempt to restore the freedoms and responsibilities of the individual in a time when devotion to one's country was emphasized. Similarly, his research on public opinion polling was an attempt to create more accurate, scientific polls, but it was also an attempt to reinstate the voice of the individual in American politics. More generally, the battle between individualistic and collectivist approaches to social psychology was indeed a debate about the boundaries, methods, and approaches of social psychology, but it was also a debate about the ultimate outcome of a society that was both increasingly chaotic and increasingly regulated. Allport's struggle to redefine the concept of collectivity in the early twentieth century must therefore be viewed not only as a reaction to philosophical notions of the social mind, but also as a reaction to the changes he witnessed in American society.

The Individual and the Social in American Social Psychology

Many historians have discussed the conflict between individualism and collectivism in early American social psychology and most of these discussions have lamented the "disappearance of the social" in the discipline. The history of social psychology is therefore full of rich discussions of the differing trends of individualism and collectivism in social psychology's past. For the most part, however, these works chart the general rise of individualism and the decline of collectivism. My own approach differs in a number of ways. I am less concerned with tracing the general decline of collectivism over time and more concerned with focusing on specific, local debates between central players in the first half of the twentieth century. I therefore do not provide a complete picture of the individualism-collectivism debate in American social psychology, but by focusing on Allport, his supporters, and his critics, I aim to add a level of concreteness to these broader histories of the individual and the social.

Previous histories of this debate, focused on the relative benefits and detriments of individualism and collectivism, frequently begin with an account of what constitutes a truly *social* social psychology and then provide a history of how that approach declined in the twentieth century. My account is more concerned with what was at stake for the historical actors in this debate and how they themselves conceptualized their discipline. How did Allport define "social psychology" and how did these definitions change over time? Why did Allport adopt individualism? Why did his followers accept his vision for social psychology and why did his critics reject it? The present account, though admittedly much more narrow than existing histories, suggests that conceptualizing and constructing the social was a complicated affair and the act was anything but linear. For Allport, the social proved stubborn for scientific analysis, a theme that seems to appear again and again in the discipline's history. In many ways, then, this

work is an attempt to provide not just an intellectual biography of Allport, but also a very localized biography of the individualism-collectivism debate in American social psychology.

The Historiography of Social Psychology

Although this work is not motivated by intentions to reassess the orientation of contemporary social psychology, it is motivated by other contemporary concerns. In the concluding chapter of this work, I reflect on my findings in order to raise critical questions regarding the historiographical orientation of contemporary histories of social psychology. Is Allport in fact the villain or the hero and, more importantly, why have histories of the discipline been so focused on his role? My goal is not to reach a verdict regarding Allport's status as the founder of social psychology; instead, I aim to draw attention to the ways in which we choose our founders, heroes, and villains and how we decide on what constitutes a "choice point" in the history of psychology. I explore the idea that contemporary stories of social psychology's history tell us as much about the past that they document as they do about the culture in which they are created. Historians have aptly applied this kind of analysis to early histories of the psychology, but I suggest that it can be fruitfully applied to our contemporary accounts. Our own histories, like those of our predecessors, can be viewed as cultural stories reflecting the values, goals, and beliefs of the current culture of historians of social psychology.

Methods and Sources

The present attempt to reconstruct Allport diverges from previous attempts not just in approach, but also in method and sources. Our current understanding of Allport is directed primarily by the published record; it is based mostly on Allport's published writings, the writings of his critics and supporters, and the secondary literature documenting his work. There has been very little scrutiny of Allport's work as it is represented in the unpublished record. The current

work uses all of these sources, published and unpublished, drawing heavily on several archival collections. The main archival repository used for this work was the Floyd Henry Allport Papers housed at Syracuse University. The collection, containing 24 boxes of correspondence, unpublished manuscripts and conference papers, handwritten research notes, and other materials, provided a wealth of information regarding the conception, development, and—in some cases— the demise of Allport's ideas directly related to social psychology. In this regard, it provided ample opportunity to explore, expand upon, and challenge our current understandings of Allport's views on social psychology and the larger role of the individual in society. Viewing the unpublished record also provided a view of Allport's work as something that was constantly under revision, a nuance that is missed when the published record serves as our central source of evidence.

It must be noted, however, that the archival record failed to provide some of the resources that I was seeking. Importantly, there is very little biographical information in the Allport papers and the papers contain few materials that reveal insight into Allport as a person. For the most part, the collection documents Allport's professional career, while details regarding his personal life are noticeably absent. It is certainly possible that Allport removed these materials from the collection. Indeed, there is some evidence that Allport was cognizant of the collection as a research resource; for example, he left a note on a folder of correspondence between himself and his brother, indicating that the materials would be relevant "for those interested in my relationship with Gordon." There is much for the historian to ponder in this collection regarding Allport's personality and the lack of personal materials alone seems to support a view of Allport as somewhat solitary and private, but for the most part one is left still wondering who he was as a person. For this reason, there is perhaps less biographical information in the present work than

there might have been otherwise. Where possible, I have used the biographical sources available to me to reconstruct as much of Allport's life as possible but the narrative has most definitely been directed by the sources, focused primarily on an intellectual history of Allport's social psychology.

Chapter One

Sociology, Psychology, and the Emergence of Social Psychology

In 1890, the same year in which Floyd Henry Allport was born, William James published his monumental two-volume text, *The Principles of Psychology.* The tenth chapter, titled "The Consciousness of Self," included a compelling discussion of the nature and importance of the social realm in the development of self. In addition to the material self, the ego, and the spiritual self, James called attention to a fourth dimension, the "social self":

> *A man's Social Self* is the recognition which he gets from his mates…Properly speaking, *a man has as many social selves as there are individuals who recognize him* and carry an image of him in their mind. To wound any one of these his images is to wound him (James, 1890, pp. 293-294)

The individual life, James contended, was an inherently social one, filled with envy, pride, love, and ambition and directed by the pursuit of an ideal social self and the desire to please others. For James, the effects of social others on the self were critical in the consciousness and behavior of the individual. In short, the social self was as real and as important to consciousness as the material self.

James' work on the social self, a work still cited frequently by contemporary social psychologists, was just one among many works to emerge in the late nineteenth century focused on explicating the relationship between mind, body, self, and society. Indeed, discussions of the social nature of the individual and the structure, function, and development of societies have maintained a constant and dynamic presence in social philosophy for centuries (Ellwood, 1938; Karpf, 1932; Mackenzie, 1890). However, these discussions took on a new form in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century as new academic disciplines—including psychology,

sociology, anthropology, and political science—began to formalize. The simultaneous

emergence of these disciplines necessitated the creation of disciplinary boundaries, a process that

contributed to debates regarding the proper scope and subject matter of each discipline (Ross,

1991; Smith, 1997). By the close of the nineteenth century, scholars from a wide variety of fields

were debating the nature of the social individual, the notion of "society" as an object of scientific

study, and the contours, boundaries, and methods of a new field that would study these emerging

concepts.

The emergence of American social psychology occurred in this context of

professionalization and disciplinary boundary-building (Good, 2000). Early American

sociologists sought to distance themselves from historically and biologically-oriented social

theories of late nineteenth-century European scholarship. In the process, they began focusing on

the psychological mechanisms of social life. Similarly, psychologists began to abandon atomistic

approaches to the study of the individual and began to examine the functional relationship

between the individual and the natural and social worlds. In addition, both groups of scholars

were searching for a way to address the tumultuous conditions of turn-of-the-century American

life. The result of these factors was the rudimentary beginnings of a new science—social

psychology—that could address the interaction between the individual and the social world.

Though there was little agreement regarding what such a science might look like, the field of

social psychology had clearly come to occupy a permanent if somewhat precarious place in the

landscape of American social science by the first decade of the twentieth century.

Debating the Social in Nineteenth-Century Europe

Discussions regarding a science of the social became quite prominent in European

scholarship in the second half of the nineteenth century, with the study of society reflecting the

social and cultural climate of late eighteenth and early nineteenth-century Europe. Instability

created by the French Revolution, tensions resulting from the Industrial Revolution in France,

and increased attention to nationalism instigated in part by German unification brought collective

concepts like "state," "nation," and "social class" into very sharp focus (Blackbourn, 2003;

Harrington, 1999; Picon, 2003). Understanding the nature of social unities, the relationship

between individual autonomy and social solidarity, and the mechanisms behind group level

concepts like conflict and cooperation therefore became of increasing importance throughout the

nineteenth century.

The Social Organism

Most nineteenth-century European scholars seemed to agree that an understanding of

collective concepts was needed; however, there was little agreement on how such concepts

should be approached or analyzed. Formulations of a science of society therefore began with

fundamental questions regarding the nature of social collectives, the relationship between such

collectives and their component parts, and the possible methods of studying these entities and

relationships. Attempts to unify the study of collective life were usually met with strong criticism

frequently aimed at the scientific status of such approaches. This was the case with organicism,

one of the most prominent nineteenth-century approaches to the study of collective life.

Organicism, represented in the work of scholars such as Herbert Spencer, René Worms, Albert

Schäffle, and Alfred Espinas, was rooted in the analogy between society and the biological

organism. According to organicists, society is an integrated entity, comparable to a living

organism (Barberis, 2003; Giddens, 1971). Although organisms are comprised of individual units

such as cells and organs, they are nonetheless integrated entities capable of scientific study.

Similarly, society may be comprised of individuals, but it maintains its own existence. Society,

like an organism, functions as an independent whole, despite the interdependent functioning of its individual components. For the organicists, a science of society could therefore be modeled on the science of biology.

In many ways, organicism was not a new concept. Theorizing about society as an organic whole has occurred throughout the history of social philosophy; Jonathan Harris, for example, has traced the concept back to the twelfth century (Harris, 1998). However, as Giddens (1971) notes, Charles Darwin's work on evolution had provided a natural-scientific framework for conceptualizing society as an evolving, adapting being. Major advances in nineteenth-century life sciences undoubtedly seemed an attractive foundation on which to build a science of society (Cohen, 1994). Organicists employed such biological analogies to argue that society was not just an independent object; it was a *natural* object. That is, they argued that society was not something invented or created by humans. Like any other organism, it contained its own levels of complexity and it developed spontaneously, according to the discernible principles of evolution (Barberis, 2003). According to the organicists, the social organism and the biological organism differed primarily in complexity; the social was more complex than the biological, but it was not substantively different.

Critics of organicism opposed the analogy of the social organism, arguing that because individual entities comprising society are capable of leaving social groupings at any time, society could not be viewed as a single organism; simply put, social collectives were too unstable. Critics also noted several other difficulties with the analogy: individuals may simultaneously belong to several societies or "organisms", they are conscious entities with individual purposes and wills, and they are physically separated from one another. Such critiques eroded perceptions of the utility of the analogy and contributed to the eventual demise of organicism around the turn

of the century. As Daniella Barberis has noted, organicism also faded as a result of a growing

distaste for seemingly metaphysical, grand systems of knowledge and, after the Dreyfus affair, a

distrust of theories that rested on biology or promoted individual subordination (Barberis, 2003).

As Barberis (2003) notes, the appeal of organicism had come in part from the utility of the

approach in demonstrating the necessity of hierarchies within a social system and in countering

the rise of individualism; according to the organicists, individuality was the product of social

bonds and the individual was and therefore should be dependent on the collective (Barberis,

2003). As anti-individualist sentiment faded in Europe, so too did the organicist approach. All of

these factors combined proved to be fatal to organicist thought; in the late nineteenth century, the

analogy between biological and social organisms began to disappear from social-philosophical

writings (Barberis, 2003).

Völkerpsychologie

Other approaches to social life were also being formulated in Europe in the mid-

nineteenth century, with some scholars proposing the establishment of a new field to address the

study of collective concepts and their relationship to individual psychology. In Germany, the

work of philosophers Moritz Lazarus and H. Steinthal promoted a science focused on religion,

mythology, language, and other collective concepts. This new *Völkerpsychologie*, which

resembled contemporary anthropology much more than contemporary psychology or sociology,

would examine the development and general properties of the "folk mind" or culture, as well as

the properties of the cultures of different groups (Diriwächter, 2004; Kalmar, 1987; Klautke,

2010; Smith, 1997). Lazarus and Steinthal viewed *Völkerpsychologie* as the study of both

individuals and nations, arguing that there is a dialectical relationship between the individual

mind and the social or "objective" mind, such that the individual mind both produces and is a

product of the larger social mind. Nonetheless, they firmly held that individual psychology was

rooted in the nation, that "the nation prevailed over the individual," and therefore individual

psychology must be explained in reference to the larger collective (Klautke, 2010, p. 6). They

advocated applying psychological laws of the individual mind to an understanding of the social

mind, creating a sort of psychology of social and cultural life.

Lazarus and Steinthal's *Völkerpsychologie* was both criticized and further developed by

Wilhelm Wundt (Fuhrer, 2004). Wundt argued that instead of applying abstract psychological

laws to social life, *Völkerpsychologie* should examine the mental products of social life, tracing

the progressive historical development of language, myth, and customs within society

(Greenwood, 2004). Employing methods similar to those of Darwin (Kroger & Scheibe, 1990),

Wundt examined the "vestiges" of social and cultural life in order to understand the development

of mind. As Greenwood (2004) points out, Wundt believed this kind of study would shed light

on the psychological processes responsible for the production of these shared social forms.

The work of Lazarus, Steinthal, and Wundt left a significant mark in the human sciences,

influencing the theories and approaches of many important scholars, including Franz Boas, W. I.

Thomas, and George Herbert Mead (Klautke, 2010). Nonetheless, the approach also had many

critics who viewed *Völkerpsychologie* as far too vague and abstract, based on casual observation

and anecdote. As one critic noted in a review of Wundt's work, "There is far too much theory,

and too little fact to please us" (Hales, 1903, p. 239). While Wundt's experimental psychology

became the model for experimental psychology in the United States (Rieber & Robinson, 2001),

his program for a *Völkerpsychologie* was practically ignored (Blumenthal, 1975; Danziger, 1979)

ignored. Others rejected the notion of a national spirit or soul and critiqued Lazarus and

Steinthal's notion of a psychology of nations, arguing that psychological processes occur only

within individuals (Klautke, 2010). Many of these authors agreed that an understanding of the social aspect of human psychology was needed. However, they argued that *Völkerpsychologie,* with its focus on the "folk spirit" and its failure to address the interaction between individuals, would not suffice (Klautke, 2010).

Social Statistics, Social Facts, and Social Contagion

The study of collective concepts by way of biological or psychological analogy—along with approaches rooted in large-scale comparative, historical research—received a serious challenge from approaches rooted in the study of social statistics. The establishment of statistical offices was widespread in Europe in the early nineteenth century, contributing to increased attention to social phenomena such as crime rates, population, suicide rates, and poverty (Hacking, 1990; McDonald, 1982; Schweber, 2001). As Schweber (2001) notes, these elusive non-material social phenomena became visible and analyzable with social statistics; regularities in one aspect of social life could be linked with regularities in another. Furthermore, the spread of a given social phenomenon could be tracked and observed in a seemingly objective manner. This provided a method of studying social phenomena without reliance on biological analogies or extensive historical-comparative system-building.

The utility of social statistics in building a science of collective concepts is exemplified in the work of French scholar Emile Durkheim. Considered by many to be the founder of sociology Durkheim was a strong critic of organicism and had encountered Wundt's work while studying in Germany during the year 1885 to 1886 (Mestrovic, 1993). Throughout the latter half of the nineteenth century, he began attempting to theorize a more adequate conceptualization of society and social facts—a science of sociology—that would go beyond biological analyses and historical examinations of collective mental life (Durkheim, 1982; Giddens, 1971). Employing

social statistics (Porter, 1996), Durkheim argued for the reality of collective concepts, noting the statistical regularity and stability of social phenomena such as suicide and crime. Durkheim referred to such collective concepts as "social facts", and argued that they could be studied scientifically, without biological analogies and without relying on explanation by way of psychological processes (Durkheim, 1982).

One of Durkheim's central arguments was that sociology could be a science completely independent of other sciences; social facts, he argued, need not be reduced to psychological or biological facts in order to be explained and understood. His critics in turn argued that societies must be explained in reference to the elements of which they are composed. Like the work of Lazarus and Steinthal, Durkheim's work was criticized for its focus on the collective and its disregard for inter-individual interaction. As Gustav Tosti wrote, "Durkheim completely overlooks the fact that a compound is explained both by the character of its elements and by the law of their interaction" (1898, p. 474). Other critics expressed concerns that Durkheim's examination of "social facts" would preclude the development of a science of the social based on generalizations across the realm of individual social forms (Small, 1905).

The strongest critiques came from scholars who viewed Durkheim's notion of social collectives as independent entities as a return to philosophical, metaphysical conceptions of the social. Gabriel Tarde, a social statistician and scholar of social life, argued that society is simply an aggregate of individual beings and criticized Durkheim for his belief "that the simple relationship of several beings can itself become a new being" (Tarde, 1969, p. 122). For Tarde, psychological processes, such as imitation and invention, provided the proper foundation for a study of collective concepts (Tarde, 1903). Tarde therefore proposed a new science, "psycho-

sociology" or "social psychology" that would study the psychological mechanisms responsible for social life.

Other European scholars similarly employed social statistics to study contagion, fads, the spread of deviance, and the general spread of ideas and behaviors throughout groups and populations. In Italy, Scipio Sighele studied the evolution and characteristics of the criminal crowd (van Ginneken, 1992). In France, Gustav Le Bon's (1896) work on crowds brought the psychological aspects of social forms into focus by examining the ways in which these kinds of "mental contagion" arise from individual thought and behavior. Crowd psychology and the processes behind mental contagion were also explored in France through nineteenth-century work on suggestibility, hypnosis, and altered states of consciousness (van Ginneken, 1992). Such work increasingly drew attention to the importance of inter-individual influence and the rise of social forms (Leach, 1992).

The work of Lazarus and Steinthal, Wundt, Durkheim, Tarde, and other scholars had demonstrated that there were many ways of approaching the study of social life. Such approaches included: the historical and comparative study of collective concepts like class, myth, and religion; observation and reflection on psychological mechanisms of social life, such as imitation, invention, suggestibility, and contagion; and the examination of social regularities through the study of social statistics. These multiple approaches and their reception within academic circles also revealed several problematic, recurring issues in the study of social life, including the relationship of a science of the social to other sciences, such as biology and psychology; the nature of social wholes and their relationship to the individuals of which they are composed; and the methods most appropriate to a study of the social. Despite these issues and the lack of agreement regarding the contours of a science of the social at the end of the

nineteenth century, European scholars had begun to reveal the myriad possibilities for such a

science.

<div align="center">Debating the Social in Early Twentieth-Century America</div>

The degree of intellectual exchange between Europe and the United States facilitated the

migration of debates regarding the social from one continent to the other. In 1895 alone, 514

American students were enrolled in German universities (Martindale, 1976). Many individuals

who would go on to become leaders in the development of the social and behavioral sciences—

including Albion Small, Richard Ely, G. Stanley Hall, and George Herbert Mead—were among

the more than 8000 Americans who received some training in Germany between 1820 and 1920

(Martindale, 1976). By the turn of the century, the discussions regarding the study of the social,

which had been so vibrant in Europe therefore become standard fare in the American discourse

of newly emerging academic disciplines that were directly concerned with the study of social

life, including sociology, psychology, and eventually, social psychology.

The Study of Society: American Sociology at the Turn of the Century

American sociology emerged as an academic discipline in the late nineteenth century,

developing in the wake of growing interest in the establishment, development, and dissolution of

social institutions instigated in part by the Civil War and changing social conditions (Martindale,

1976; Ross, 1991). As Smith (1997) notes, rapid immigration contributed to massive population

growth and rapid urbanization, both of which dramatically altered the landscape of America and

contributed to the development of several disciplines devoted to studying social history and

social change.

The early history of sociology, exemplified by the work of William Graham Sumner and

Lester Frank Ward, resembled European social philosophies rooted in historical analysis and

biological analogies (Bannister, 1987; Ross, 1991). Both scholars viewed society as progressing

through stages of development governed by historical laws (Ross, 1991). Sumner relied heavily

on Social Darwinism to explain the past and present state of American society and to argue for a

laissez-faire approach to government. Ward also relied on evolutionary theory, arguing that

psychic and social life developed out of biological life. Unlike Sumner, however, Ward

promoted the thoughtful direction of society. Following Auguste Comte, he held that science and

social governance could prescribe and guide the future direction of the social world, ensuring

intellectual progress. In the closing decades of the nineteenth century, the views of these two

men dominated American thought on the establishment and development of social life and they

were considered leaders in the newly developing field of sociology. This is perhaps best

evidenced by the fact that Ward and Sumner served as the first two presidents of the American

Sociological Society, formed in 1905.[2]

The work of Ward and Sumner, however, was not well suited to the developing ethos of

specialization and disciplinary differentiation that came to dominate the human sciences in the

twentieth century. The subject matter of the social world was slowly divided between these

disciplines and generalist approaches that cut across these boundaries became less conventional

and less popular (Smith, 1997). This specialization contributed to and reflected the

institutionalization of separate disciplines. Academic societies reflecting differentiated,

disciplinary subject matters were formed, including the American Historical Association, the

American Economic Association, and the American Psychological Association (Smith, 1997).

Similarly, academic courses and departments devoted to separate fields of study were

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[2] The Society changed its name from the American Sociological Society (ASS) to the American Sociological Association (ASA) in 1959 upon request from the membership (Martindale, 1976).

established, resulting in differentiated training models and a focus on differentiated subject matters.

Sociology was one of many disciplines to emerge during this period. During the 1890s, the field acquired all of the usual procurements of an independent discipline (Camic, 1995; Martindale, 1976). Several courses in sociology were offered during the 1890s and in 1892, the first department of sociology was established by Albion Small at the University of Chicago. In 1894, a professorship of sociology was created at Columbia and in 1895 the *American Journal of Sociology* was founded. Several textbooks devoted to the fundamentals also emerged in the late 1800s, including Franklin Giddings' (1896) *Principles of Sociology* and Albion Small's *Introduction to the Study of Society* (Small & Vincent, 1894).

These institutional acknowledgements of the fledgling field brought a sense of confidence for scholars of social life in both Europe and North America. During the late nineteenth century, American journals were filled with confident statements about the future of the discipline. In 1897, American social philosopher James Hayden Tufts confidently stated that "unless all signs fail, the study of sociology is to take its place not merely in the graduate schools of universities, but in the under-graduate work of the colleges" (Tufts, 1897a, p. 660). Similarly, in an article titled "The Era of Sociology," Albion Small pointed to the growing ubiquity of the new field, noting that sociology "has a foremost place in the thought of modern men" (1895, p. 1). As one scholar put it, sociology seemed to be entering "a stage of definition" (Simmell, 1898, p. 662).

Despite this optimism, however, many scholars also acknowledged that the field was still in a rather confused state; indeed, disagreements regarding its aims, methods, and subject matter were as profuse as they had been in the European context. American sociologists, like their

European counterparts, were searching for a way of conceptualizing social phenomena.

However, from the start, American sociology took on a character that was markedly different

from that found in Europe. As Dorothy Ross (1991) has noted, the turn of the century was a

period of massive social and industrial upheaval and rapid social change, resulting in a "sense of

disjunction with the past" and a "new liberal search for a social ethic" (p. 148). Ross suggests

that these changes led to a new focus on fact-oriented approaches that were grounded in concrete

social forms:

> The new concentrations of economic power, the teeming, polyglot cities, and the
>
> expansion of urban, state, and federal governance created new worlds that required
>
> detailed knowledge. The great preponderance of social scientists' publications during
>
> these years were empirical studies of the concrete operation of business, government, and
>
> social life (Ross, 1991, p. 157).

These changes and the turn toward a more detail-oriented approach were indeed evident in the

early sociological literature, where critiques of grand social theories were abundant. Abstract

sociological stage theories that posited a natural and predictable development of human social

life over the course of human history were the object of much criticism in early American

sociology. Grand social theories, such as those of Lazarus and Steinthal, Vico, Herder, and

Hegel were viewed as teleological, putting forward the notion of a social ideal that was more

closely approximated with the passing of each developmental stage (Adams, 1904). Approaches

that presented society as changing but unchangeable, were not amenable to the American

temperament. As sociologist Albion Small explained, a more scientific, process-oriented

approach was wanted:

The notion of an ideal social condition, in the static sense, can never again secure even

quasi-scientific endorsement. *Progressive functional adaptation to conditions that*

change in the course of the functioning is human destiny…There will be increasing work

and demand for men trained in knowledge of social processes (Small, 1905, p. 9).

Small and other early sociologists therefore slowly abandoned the search for historical paths to a

given social ideal and began searching for the rubrics of a science that could address adaptation

and social process. Sociologists therefore turned to topics such as social interest, competition,

cooperation, and assimilation.

The debates on the nature of the social, which had permeated European social science,

were also standard fare in late nineteenth-century American scholarship. Like their European

counterparts, American scholars also struggled to define the social. As Martindale notes, the

collectivism that was considerably widespread in European scholarship failed to take root in

America:

The concept of society as a superindividual entity that obeyed its own laws and was the

source of all good and evil was alien to the American experience. Such an ideal

immediately conjured up the worst forms of European authoritarianism. Society to most

early Americans was a set of interpersonal arrangements established at the town hall

meeting and subject to change whenever they proved problematic (Martindale, 1976, p.

35)

Collectivist theories of society were therefore greeted with much skepticism and were frequently

associated with the now outdated organicism of the mid-nineteenth century. By 1905, theories

that posited the existence of a social mind or social organism were therefore considered to be of

little use, except as analogies for the functioning of society (Thomas, 1905). As was the case in

European social science, collectivist approaches came to be viewed as vague and metaphysical, representative of philosophy rather than science (Adams, 1904). Many sociologists therefore began searching for a new unit of analysis that was more amenable to scientific analysis. As sociologist Edward Allsworth Ross noted,

> Sociology…must select some simple relation or interaction and pursue it through all the infinite variety of its manifestations. From detecting vague and superficial analogies among a small number of complex wholes it must pass to the discovery of true and deep-lying resemblances among a large number of simple elementary facts (Ross, 1903, p. 191).

Many scholars agreed with Ross's rejection of large-scale social theorizing, arguing that the new field had to adopt a more manageable subject matter, different from that of other social sciences (Small, 1904; Willcox, 1897).

The Study of the Individual: The Emergence of American Psychology

At the same time that sociologists were debating the contours of their discipline in the late nineteenth century, the field of psychology was also taking its place among the many emerging human sciences. The first graduate programs in psychology began to emerge in the United States in the 1880s (Benjamin, 2001), and in 1892, the American Psychological Association was founded (Sokal, 1992). Journals also began to appear in the late nineteenth century: the *American Journal of Psychology* was founded in 1887 by G. Stanley Hall and by 1917, there were 10 journals devoted exclusively to psychology (Johnson, 2000). Laboratories of psychology also began to proliferate in the late nineteenth century; approximately 41 had been established by the turn of the century (Benjamin, 2000).

Late nineteenth and early twentieth century American psychologists initially drew heavily on the practices of German physiological psychology, studying the principles, structures, processes and contents of the average, normal, adult mind (Cravens & Burnham, 1971; O'Donnell, 1985). Studies of sensation, perception, memory, thinking, and reaction time made up the central cannon of American experimental psychology in the late nineteenth century and the experimental method became one of the defining features of the field (Boring, 1950; Coon, 1993). The majority of early American psychologists viewed psychology in a very broad fashion as the study of mind or consciousness: Edward Bradford Titchener defined the new field as "the science of mind" (Titchener, 1898, p. 1); James Mark Baldwin described it as the "science of the phenomena of consciousness" (Baldwin, 1893, p. 1); and William James defined it as the "Science of Mental Life" (James, 1890, p. 1). These early textbook definitions, with their focus on science and their dismissal of the soul as a feasible subject matter for the new field, reflected psychology's gradual and purposeful movement away from philosophy (Reed, 1997).

Although this new psychology, with its experimental methods and its focus on consciousness, indeed bore the stamp of nineteenth-century German physiological psychology, American psychology was decidedly different from its German counterpart by as early as the turn of the century. This was partially due to the fact that the program of research inspired by Wilhelm Wundt and his followers became riddled with difficulties and inconsistencies at the end of the nineteenth century, resulting in disagreements and new interpretations of data gleaned from that program (Green, 2009). Furthermore, like sociologists, early American psychologists were searching for a psychology that could address the abrupt urbanization, labor unrest, and general change and upheaval that was so characteristic of turn-of-the-century American life. Psychology, like sociology, was physically situated in some of the largest and most tumultuous

of urban environments—Chicago and New York City. It is not surprising, therefore, that they too turned away from abstract theories of the mind toward theories and approaches that were more amenable to understanding individual differences, change, and adaptation (Cravens & Burnham, 1971; Green, 2009).

The psychology that developed in this context was a functional psychology rooted in evolutionary theory (Green, 2009). Darwin's *Origin of Species* had demonstrated the critical importance of environment in the survival of species and his work on emotion had begun to demonstrate the possibilities for applying the theory to humans. Leading psychologists of the late nineteenth century, such as William James, John Dewey, and James Mark Baldwin framed their approaches to the new psychology in the context of evolutionary theory. Studies of abstract mental principles and laws therefore gave way to studies focused on the "acts," "habits," and "coordinations" of the organism; such approaches treated the organism as a coordinated, adaptive, changing unit and treated mental life or consciousness as an adaptive tool that facilitated the adjustment of organism and environment (James, 1890).

One of the outcomes of this shift in perspective was an increased emphasis on the role played by the social environment in the life of the individual. As John Dewey (1884) explained, mental life could no longer be viewed as "a *rendezvous* in which isolated atomic sensations and ideas may gather" (p. 287). Instead, mental life was considered an integral part of the adapting, changing organism in a constantly changing environment (Dewey, 1884; James, 1890). That environment, Dewey (1884) argued, included "that organized social life into which [the individual] is born, from which he draws his mental and spiritual sustenance, and in which he must perform his proper function or become a mental and moral wreck" (p. 287). Dewey and others therefore began espousing a science of psychology that attended to the plasticity of human

thought and behavior, the creation of social habits, and the general ways in which organisms adapted to both the natural and social environment (Baldwin, 1897a; James, 1890; Judd, 1910). Scholars interested in psychological approaches to consciousness began expanding their approaches to examine "social consciousness," "social habits," "social activities," and the "social environment" (Ames, 1906; Baldwin, 1896; Dewey, 1900; Washburn, 1903). The notion of the solitary individual, existing outside of social relations soon no longer seemed tenable. As one scholar explained, "The consciousness of the present is distinctively social and tends to the merging of the individual more or less completely in the social organism" (Ormond, 1901, p. 27). As Ormond noted, such sensibilities were new ones for psychology which had previously "been styled the psychology of the solitary" (p. 27).

<div align="center">Society and the Individual: The Emergence of Social Psychology</div>

With sociologists searching for a more manageable unit of analysis for understanding the social world and psychologists seeking to understand the relationship between the social environment and the individual, a new field of study began to emerge: social psychology. Many sociologists and psychologists began proposing social psychology as a discipline that would study neither the large-scale collective entities of sociology nor the individual-level phenomena of psychology; instead, social psychology would adopt some intermediary level of analysis omitted by these two disciplines. Discovering this intermediary level, however, proved difficult and the varieties of social psychology that emerged from these formulations reflected an ongoing struggle to define the nature of the relationship between the individual and society.

Many of these early approaches conceptualized social psychology as the study of the development of social consciousness in the individual. This approach was most fully laid out by James Mark Baldwin in his 1897 text, *Social and Ethical Interpretations in Mental*

Development: A Study in Social Psychology (Baldwin, 1897b). In this work, perhaps the first prominent work on social psychology in the United States, Baldwin argued—just as James had in 1890—that the self was essentially a social product. The development of this social self or *socius*, Baldwin suggested, occurs through the process of imitation. For Baldwin, sociality develops through a *dialectic of personal growth,* where individuals imitate and become imitative models for social others. Understanding this *socius* was the subject matter of social psychology. He criticized attempts to understand society or individual psychology without studying both together. For Baldwin, social psychology required an understanding of the psychology of the socius as well as the social conditions under which the socius develops (Baldwin, 1897b).

Baldwin's theory of the socius was heavily critiqued by psychologists and sociologists, primarily because of his reliance on the concept of imitation as the basis of sociality and his seemingly circular explanations of the relationship between the individual and society (Dewey, 1898; Washburn, 1903). Nonetheless, many scholars heralded Baldwin's approach as the proper foundation upon which to build a new science of social psychology that was based not on abstract generalities or isolated individuals, but rather on the social process. William Caldwell noted that while Baldwin's work was flawed and incomplete, it demonstrated the importance of the relationships between individuals in mental development and specifically, "the part played by social contact, by social action and reaction, in the mental development of the individual" (Caldwell, 1899, p. 183). Gustav Tosti similarly noted that Baldwin's work on imitation had drawn attention to social consciousness and inter-individual influence, helping to define social psychology as the study of "the genesis of that particular state of consciousness which is consequent in the individual upon the presence of and the contact with his fellows" (Tosti, 1898, p. 358). Tosti employed Baldwin's work to suggest that social psychology was responsible for

studying the development of the social state of mind in the individual as a result of the social environment, while sociology would study the social environment and the ways in which that environment is altered by the social individual.

The notion of social consciousness as a cornerstone in an understanding of social life was further elaborated by sociologists. Charles Horton Cooley (1902, 1909) also argued that the individual and the social are essentially inseparable in individual development. However, unlike Baldwin, Cooley adopted an organic view of society, arguing that society must be viewed as a complex whole rather than as simply the compilation of many imitative individuals. The social whole, he argued, must not be reduced in an attempt at explanation. Instead it must be approached as a unity and the individual and society must be studied without separation: "A separate individual is an abstraction unknown to experience, and so likewise is society when regarded as something apart from individuals" (1902, p. 2). For Cooley, those theories (including psychological theories and approaches) that focused on the individual apart from the social were "artificial" (1909, p. 3); an adequate understanding of both society and the individual required constant alternating or simultaneous attention to both aspects. Cooley's own work focused on primary groups and the development of the social or "looking-glass" self (Collier, Minton, & Reynolds, 1991).

The early twentieth century also saw the first publications of George Herbert Mead, who followed the emerging literature on social psychology carefully. He also began contributing to this literature, working out an approach to social psychology rooted in social consciousness and the social act. The approach was a novel one that went beyond Baldwin's focus on the development of social consciousness and both Tarde and Baldwin's focus on imitation and suggestion. Mead (1910) suggested that the proper unit of study for social psychology was the

social act, which involves interactions between individuals where "one individual serves in his action as a stimulus to a response from another individual" (p. 397). These basic stimuli and responses form the basis of adjustment and habit, as well as social meaning and social consciousness. Meaning arises in these responses and adjustments and then comes to dictate the relationship between stimulation and response. Mead's approach, rooted in the functionalist framework promoted by John Dewey (1896), provided a new way of thinking about the social realm in the functionalist language of adjustment and habit formation.

The influence of Mead and Dewey on the emerging field of social psychology is perhaps most evident in the work of sociologist, Charles Ellwood. Ellwood—who received his Ph.D. at the University of Chicago under the mentorship of Albion Small, John Dewey, and George Herbert Mead—critiqued Baldwin's focus on the individual and argued that social psychology must be a psychology of the group, a "functional psychology of the collective mind" (Ellwood, 1899a, p. 100). For Ellwood (1899a, 1899b, 1899c), social psychology was essentially a psychology of society, where the principles of individual, functional psychology are transferred to society. A group could be conceived of as a "social coordination" similar to an individual coordination, involving a group of individuals acting together and maintaining patterns of relationships. Just as successful individual coordinations become habits, successful social coordinations become social habits, which are essentially social customs, institutions, and all other organized social forms. Social change may be viewed in much the same way as individual adaptation, where the breakdown of a coordination requires readjustment and change until new coordinations are built. Social psychology, he argued, was responsible for explaining these "group psychical processes" (Ellwood, 1899a, p. 657) and all "psychic phenomena related to group life" (p. 657). Such phenomena included political revolutions, mob behavior, family life,

and the behavior of committees. An understanding of the psychic phenomena of group life would result in an understanding of these larger social structures.

Definitions of and approaches to this emerging field of social psychology continued to proliferate around the turn of the century, with many scholars seeking ways of differentiating social psychology from its parent sciences of sociology and psychology. In fact discussions of the social had become so profuse that one scholar bemoaned the "exaggeration of the social" noting that "it has seemed that nothing is significant which is not 'social'" (Fite, 1907, p. 393). Others lamented the ambiguity that was arising in reference to the word "social," noting that it could be applied to the relations between individuals, to communities, to groups, or to individual consciousness (Tufts, 1904).

Discussions regarding social psychology also fueled the flame of nineteenth-century debates on the possibility of a social mind or collective consciousness. Sociologists continued to debate the notion of the social mind, recognizing its value for understanding social life, while also refuting nineteenth-century theorizing on the historical development of a collective mind or folk spirit. Sociologist George Vincent, for example, argued that social life could not be reduced to the interaction of individuals, but also urged scholars to attend to the ways in which the "social mind" affects the individual (Vincent, 1897). Ellwood (1899d) argued for maintaining the concept of the social or collective mind, but cautioned that scholars must view the social mind not as an entity, but rather as a "psychical process which mediates the new adjustments in the group life-process" (p. 224). For psychologists, however, the notion of the social mind had begun to fade with the adoption of Baldwin's genetic approach to the social. While taking stock of the field in 1905, one scholar noted:

> There is a marked tendency to agree that a so-called 'social mind' does not exist and that social phenomena do not exist apart from the individual. Social psychology now tends to devote itself to a study of the individual mind in so far as it presents what is known as 'group consciousness' (Buchner, 1905, p. 96).

James Hayden Tufts likewise noted that "there is coming to be a consensus of opinion that the field must lie in the consciousness of the individual as affected by his group relations" (Tufts, 1905, p. 397). Nonetheless, sociologists and psychologists were still somewhat at a loss as to how to account for the social without invoking the notion of a collective mind. Both groups struggled to understand how social psychology could dismiss or reconceptualize the social mind, while still accounting for the social world.

Sociologist W. I. Thomas captured the difficult situation of social psychology in a 1904 address before the Congress of Arts and Science:

> There is at present a tendency to agree that there is no social mind and no social psychology apart from individual mind and individual psychology; at the same time individual mind cannot be understood apart from the social environment, and society cannot be understood apart from the operation of individual mind (Thomas, 1905, p. 392)

By the first decade of the twentieth century, social psychology had come to occupy a somewhat elusive space in the expanding and increasingly divided terrain of American social science, where the study of the social and the study of the individual seemed both complementary and contradictory. The position of social psychology within this landscape would continue to be contested in the early twentieth century as sociologists and psychologists continued to sharpen the contours of their own disciplinary spaces. The increasing separation of psychology and sociology meant that social psychology, which initially seemed to have the potential to serve as a

bridge between the two fields, instead occupied an increasingly interstitial space that did not fit adequately within the realm of either discipline. At the start of the twentieth century, young scholars like Floyd Allport who were interested in the problems of the social world therefore found themselves entering a field that was not well defined, cloaked in controversy, and very much in its infancy.

Chapter 2

Allport at Harvard (1915-1922)

In the latter half of the nineteenth century, the Harvard Department of Philosophy experienced tremendous growth. Harvard president, Charles Eliot, had expanded the undergraduate curriculum at Harvard and secured funding for additional professorships across the University. Furthermore, in 1872, Eliot organized a Graduate Department, which was reorganized as the Harvard Graduate School in 1890. The success of the Graduate school rivaled that of Johns Hopkins only 10 years later. By 1900, the Harvard Department of Philosophy could boast some of the most celebrated names in the business, including William James, Josiah Royce, Hugo Münsterberg, George Herbert Palmer, and George Santayana. Kuklick (1977) describes the period from approximately 1869 until 1912 as the "golden age" of philosophy at Harvard.

However, the turn-of-the-century success that the Department enjoyed was followed by a period of disorganization and doubt. In 1907, William James retired and, three years later, died. This was followed by Santayana's resignation in 1912 and Palmer's retirement in 1913. Finally, in 1916, both Royce and Münsterberg also died, leaving the Department scrambling for new hires that could sustain the reputation of these celebrated scholars (Kuklick, 1977). This situation led to internal strife as well as a string of temporary hires. Furthermore, in the absence of established and vocal scholars, the Department came to lack its previous atmosphere of intense and productive philosophical debate. As Kuklick notes, "the junior members of the old department and those who joined them initially had no idea of where philosophy should go; they were not only searching for new personnel but also for a new vision of speculation and their place in it" (p. 416).

To make matters more complicated, the Department would also have to contend with a new difficulty. While the previous generation of Harvard philosophers struggled with the conceptual relationship between psychology and philosophy, the new generation would also have to struggle with the organizational relationship. In 1912, the Department of Philosophy was renamed the Department of Philosophy and Psychology. Kuklick argues that "this change only formally signaled the increasing disparity between those who studied the one and those who studied the other" (p. 242). Furthermore, the new president, Lawrence Lowell, and the philosophically-oriented members of the Department did not see the development of psychology as a priority. Despite many opportunities to secure promising scholars in the field, including Robert Yerkes, E. B. Titchener, and James McKeen Cattell, psychology remained largely subordinate to philosophy and would not begin to build up a promising line of development until the 1930s (Kuklick, 1977).

It was in this somewhat chaotic environment that a young Floyd Henry Allport began his days as a graduate student at Harvard in 1915. While at Harvard, Allport was immersed in both the traditional philosophical debates of the Department and the discipline, as well as the new experimental methods being taught and practiced in the Harvard Psychological Laboratory. Both of these aspects of his training would later manifest themselves in his attempts to solve the perennial problem of the individual and society using experimental methods. Allport's close contact with Edwin Bissell Holt and Ralph Barton Perry provided him with a behavioristic, analytic framework for the study of social phenomena. The platform of the New Realist philosophy, developed in part by his mentors, helped him to rethink popular terms such as "social consciousness" and the "social will" and redefine the "social" as an objective property of the external environment. And of course, the brief but important time he spent working with

Hugo Münsterberg provided him with a dissertation topic that would serve as an exemplar of the

possibilities of studying social behavior in a laboratory setting.

Allport's Early Life

Floyd Henry Allport was born in 1890 in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, the second of four

sons.[3] His father, John Edwards Allport, was a doctor who ran his practice out of the family

home and often took his sons on house calls (G. Allport, 1967). His mother, Nellie (Wise)

Allport, was a teacher prior to her marriage and was a very religious woman. Both parents had a

high-school education. When Floyd was born, John Allport was 28 and Nellie Allport was 29

and the family lived in a rural village with a population under 1000 ("Factors in Psychological

Leadership," 1952). The household was a very full one; Allport's maternal grandparents, who

were founders of the Free Methodist Church in Fulton, New York, lived with the family for

much of Allport's childhood. His father's brother also resided with them for a time as did John

Allport's patients when necessary. By 1896, Nellie had given birth to three sons, Harold, Floyd,

and Fayette, and was pregnant with her last child, Gordon. The family moved to Baltimore in

1896 so that John could complete his medical education at the Baltimore Medical College. Their

stay in Baltimore, however, was short-lived[4] and the family relocated first to Montezuma,

Indiana, then to Streetsboro, Ohio, then to Hudson, Ohio, and finally to Cleveland, where they

would remain until all of their sons had left home.[5]

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[3] As noted in the introduction, the details of Allport's youth have been particularly hard to locate. To reconstruct this period, I've relied primarily on an autobiographical chapter written by Allport in 1974, Harvard College Class Reports, correspondence between Floyd and Gordon Allport, and the reminiscences of Gordon Allport found in the Gordon Allport Papers as well as in Nicholson's (2003) work on Gordon.

[4] Prior to their move to Baltimore, John Allport had purchased a patented drug in Canada and sold it for profit in the United States. He was charged for violating patent rights and when officers arrived at the family home to present John Allport with a summons, he "vaulted the back fence and skipped out" (G. Allport, n.d., p. 16). Nellie and the children fled Baltimore and returned to Fulton, while John remained in hiding. Nellie eventually visited the law firm in charge of the case and had the charges against John dropped.

[5] The dates of the family's various relocations are uncertain, but they were situated in Cleveland as early as 1913 (G. Allport, 1967)

The Allport home was a very religious one, due largely to Nellie's strong Methodist upbringing. In their autobiographies, both Floyd (1974) and Gordon (1967) recalled the influence of their mother's faith. In raising her sons, Nellie's highest aspiration was to pass her faith on to her children. She had particularly high hopes for Floyd. In an 1896 diary entry, she wrote:

> Little Floyd's heart yields to religious influences apparently more than Harold's, and evidently God has chosen him for His work. At 6 ½ years he said, 'Mama, somewhere, there is a pulpit for me, isn't there?' And he often says, 'Mama, I shall be a missionary.' O, how much wisdom I need to make and not mar these little lives." (G. Allport, n.d., p. 15).[6]

Allport would later recall attending "many revivals, camp meetings, and the like" (Allport, 1974, p. 3) as part of his Methodist upbringing, but his own religious sentiments during his youth were somewhat mixed. He later described periods of religious conversion followed by periods of "much let down when the emotional fervor had passed" (Allport, 1974, p. 3). As a teenager, Allport turned to reading philosophy as a way to "break away from the dogma of youthful religious training" (Allport, 1919b, p. 3). Daniel Katz[7] attributed much of Allport's approach to social psychology to his small-town upbringing and specifically to the values of "individual responsibility, independence, integrity and sensitivity" (Katz, n.d., p. 4) that were emphasized in the Allport household. These values, Katz argued, "were so deeply ingrained in Floyd that they colored his way of thinking, motivated his assault on institutional fictions…In Allport's view, rather than reify some group concept, we should make people the causal agency of social behavior" (p. 4).

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[6] These recollections of Nellie Wise are found in a booklet in the G. W. Allport papers. The booklet was created by Gordon Allport titled *The Quest of Nellie Wise*. In it, he reprinted significant portions of his mother's personal diary.

[7] Allport's first graduate student, Daniel Katz (1903-1998), remained a friend and supporter of Allport until his death. It becomes apparent that Katz did not always agree with Allport's views on social psychology and sometimes seemed very hesitant about Allport's later work. Nonetheless, he stayed in close touch with him for nearly 50 years.

Upon graduating high school in 1909, Allport went to Harvard to study biology. With the help of several scholarships and fellowships (Allport, 1919b), he completed his Bachelor of Arts degree after four years of study, with a major in biology and minor concentrations in psychology, anthropology, and music. Although there is little documentation concerning these years,[8] Allport (1919b) recalls that it was at this time that he became oriented towards natural science as well as towards graduate work:

> I became passionately interested in natural science, especially zoology and the law of evolution. Species, animal forms, and the like thrilled my imagination. At the same time I wanted to be "master of my fate" and so my soul demanded some sort of purposive outlook upon life. I was extremely ambitious to achieve something (p. 4)

After receiving his degree, Allport returned to his parents' home in Cleveland, Ohio for a brief period and taught English at his old high school. He then spent a year working with his father, serving as a publicity manager for a campaign to raise hospital funds. After two years away from Harvard, Allport decided to return:

> I realized that mixed with the wild, and adventurous spirit of youth I had a sober, scientific propensity. I remembered how psychology had fascinated me in the good, old days, so I came back to be one of those unspeakable fossils known as "graduate students" (Allport, 1917a)

In 1915, Allport left Cleveland, returned to Harvard, and began his doctoral studies in the Harvard Department of Philosophy and Psychology.

The Beginnings of Allportian Individualism

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[8] Again, it is difficult to say how much interaction Allport had with Harvard psychology and philosophy during his undergraduate years. Given his focus on biology and his self-expressed interest in zoology, one would expect that he had some interaction with Yerkes, who was conducting work on comparative psychology in the laboratory at the time (see Kuklick, 1977). Yerkes left Harvard in 1917.

Allport's years as a graduate student were filled with both the mundane and the unusual. When he arrived at Harvard, Hugo Münsterberg was assigned as his dissertation supervisor, but when Münsterberg died at the lectern in 1916, Allport turned to E. B. Holt and Herbert Langfeld for mentorship. This situation may not have been much of a loss to Allport, who was not particularly fond of Münsterberg's ideas; he also expressed distaste for the approaches of other Department members, including Ernest Hocking, George Santayana, and later, William McDougall (Allport, 1974). According to Allport's recollections, he was not well-liked in the Department during his years as a student and later as an instructor[9] and he felt the tension in Emerson Hall between the first-floor philosophers and the top-floor psychologists. Despite Allport's admiration for some of the philosophers, primarily Ralph Barton Perry, his relationship with Langfeld and his penchant for science ensured he would be associated first and foremost with the psychologists.

The intellectual atmosphere at Harvard during Allport's years as a graduate student seems to have been characterized by a struggle to define psychology as a science and an uncertainty regarding just how psychology would sit in relation to philosophy. Debate regarding the nature of consciousness, the relative utility of introspective methods, and the proper place for comparative psychology was rampant in the Department (Kuklick, 1977). There was, however, one thing that all of Allport's early mentors, including Münsterberg, Holt, Langfeld, and Perry advocated: exact, experimental science. Although Holt and Perry were primarily philosophers, their philosophical writings promoted and paved the way for a psychology that was separate from speculation and based on observable behavior and experimental methods.

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[9] Allport anticipated becoming a faculty member at Harvard (Allport, 1919b). This, however, did not occur. By Allport's own account, the Department underwent a reorganization when E. G. Boring arrived, and Allport was asked to leave (Allport, 1974).

Through his time as Langfeld's assistant in introductory experimental psychology courses, Allport learned the ins and outs of early twentieth-century laboratory psychology. Herbert Sidney Langfeld (1879-1958) had earned his Ph.D. in 1909 under Carl Stumpf at the University of Berlin (Zusne, 1975). He arrived at Harvard that same year, working his way up to Associate Professor by 1924 (Barlett, 1958). During his time at Harvard, Langfeld was interested in general sensory and motor processes and later in aesthetics (see Langfeld, 1920). In 1916, he and Allport co-authored a laboratory manual for the field (Langfeld & Allport, 1916), a work that likely resulted from Allport's years as Langfeld's assistant in introductory psychology courses.

The manual was essentially a "how-to" guide for new psychology undergraduates beginning to learn their way around the laboratory. It outlined a number of studies that could be performed in one semester with minimal equipment, employing another student as a participant. The experiments were divided into studies on sensation, perception, attention, motor processes, association, memory, imagery, and affection. The work essentially outlined the classic experimental methods and studies, including studies of differential thresholds, introspective comparisons, and sensory and motor responding. The manual also included more novel experiments, one in which a student is instructed to commit a small crime and then free association techniques and reaction times are used to distinguish between the "criminal" student and an "innocent" student.[10] Writing this manual with Langfeld and working alongside him in the Harvard laboratory undoubtedly help to initiate Allport into the culture of experimental psychology. As Daniel Katz noted, "Langfeld's emphasis upon scientific rigor helped Allport

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[10] This experiment was likely not devised by Langfeld and Allport. Münsterberg describes similar experiments and approaches in *On the Witness Stand* (1908) and *Psychology: General and Applied* (1914).

recognize the importance of appropriate techniques and contributed to Allport's scientism" (Katz, n.d., p. 6).[11]

Allport also worked closely with Münsterberg for a brief period, serving as his assistant in introductory psychology in 1915 (G. Allport, 1967). Importantly, it was Münsterberg who suggested the topic for Allport's dissertation on social facilitation. Although Allport was not particularly fond of Münsterberg's ideas, he was undoubtedly influenced by his devotion to careful experimentation and his promotion of a new, experimental social psychology.[12] In *Psychology and Social Sanity*, for example, Münsterberg (1914a) provided a lengthy argument against the idea that history, literature, and folk lore could provide insight into psychological processes. These bodies of work, he contended, contain little aside from vague generalities and metaphors. Such aphorisms, he argued, would be no replacement for firm, experimental findings: "The mathematical statistics of the professional students of the mind and their test experiments in the laboratories are certainly less picturesque, but they have the one advantage that the results are true" (p. 319).

In this same text, Münsterberg laid the groundwork for experimental social psychology arguing that the time was ripe for the application of these exact methods to the study of the individual in relation to the social world. He argued that in addition to studying the laws of the individual mind, psychology must also seek to explain "the working together of human minds" beginning with the "simplest contact" between individuals and eventually shedding light on "the widest circle of the civilized nations" (p. 4). To understand these topics, psychology would necessarily extend its subject matter to a study of the "behavior of the social group and the laws

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[11] The relationship between Allport and Langfeld ended up being quite beneficial for Katz. After completing his doctoral degree he was hired at Princeton, where Langfeld had gone after leaving Harvard.

[12] Allport later noted that his relationship with Münsterberg was "rather casual" and stated that "Münsterberg was conscientious and helped when I went to him which was not often" ("Factors in Psychological Leadership," 1952).

of the social mind and the meaning of the social impulses" (p. 4). Münsterberg saw his inclusion of social psychology as one of the features that differentiated his text from its predecessors, which had focused only on individual psychology.

Allport's devotion to scientific methods and laboratory methodology may have been the result of his close association with Langfeld and his time as Münsterberg's assistant, but his philosophical framework was influenced largely by Edwin Bissell Holt (1873-1946) and Ralph Barton Perry (1876-1957). Langfeld (1946) described Holt as "the real guide of the graduate research" (p. 253) at Harvard; although Münsterberg often assigned the dissertation topics, Holt assisted the students in carrying out the research properly and finding their way around the Harvard Psychological Laboratory. In his first book-length work, *The Concept of Consciousness,* Holt laid out the beginnings of what Kuklick (1977) has aptly described as a framework for philosophical behaviorism. Holt, a student of James and Münsterberg, was well aware of the difficulties of idealism as well as the many varieties of realism; he was also aware of the difficulties inherent in psychology due to the intangible nature of consciousness and its relation to the external world. His own contribution to these debates began with his 1914 work, *The Concept of Consciousness*. In this text, Holt attempted to relocate consciousness, placing it outside of the organism, and redefining it in terms of environmental cues and behavioral responses. In doing so, he created an intricate philosophical framework for psychology as the study of behavior.

In *The Concept of Consciousness*, Holt (1914) essentially argued that what had been termed consciousness was nothing more than that portion of the environment to which an organism responds. If an organism responds distinctly and repeatedly to a given portion of the environment, one can say that that stimulus is part of the organism's consciousness or "psychic

manifold." This psychic manifold includes not only physical objects, but also non-physical properties such as intensity and direction. He stressed that both the physical objects and the non-physical properties are *outside* of the organism. Thus, Holt argued, "consciousness or mind is not inside the skull nor secreted anywhere within the nervous system; but that all objects that one perceives, including the so-called 'secondary qualities,' are 'out there' just where and as they seem to be" (p. 181). In other words, the environment consists of all possible physical objects and non-physical properties of objects. Consciousness, on the other hand, consists of all of those objects and secondary qualities of objects of which the organism is aware. Understanding consciousness or the "psychic manifold" involves determining the distinct responses of the organism to different objects and properties in the environment: "the knowing process is deducible from the life-process of response" (p. 183).

Holt expanded his concept of psychology as the study of response in 1915. In a supplement at the end of *The Freudian Wish*,[13] Holt (1915a) argued for a study of the organization of behavior over and above the study of reflex action; in essence, he advocated a study of the functions of behavior instead of the physiological processes underlying behavior.[14] He urged his colleagues to "put our microscope back into its case" (161), and instead examine behavior as a function of and purposive response to the environment:

> the behaving organism…is always doing something, and the fairly *accurate description* of this activity will invariably reveal a law (or laws) whereby this activity is shown to be a constant function of some aspect of the objective world (p. 166)

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[13] This supplement in *The Freudian Wish* had also appeared the same year as an article in the *Journal of Philosophy, Psychology, and Scientific Methods* (Holt, 1915b).

[14] This is very similar to the arguments that Allport would make much later in his career in the context of event-structure theory.

In this work, Holt stressed the idea of purpose in behavior, reaffirmed his idea of consciousness as a relation between organism and environment, and reiterated the idea that the study of behavior illuminates this relationship.

Allport's later pronouncements of social psychology as the study of behavior mirror Holt's careful arguments for behavioral response as a guide to conscious awareness. Allport certainly felt indebted to Holt, as evidenced by the acknowledgements section in his 1924 text.[15] However, Allport's platform for a behavioristic social psychology was also strongly rooted in arguments against the notion of the social mind; in formulating these arguments, he would have found no better ally than Ralph Barton Perry. Like Holt, Perry fought long and hard against idealism, using his skills as a logician to identify errors in the arguments of the idealists (Perry, 1910). He also used the same set of skills to argue against the notion of consciousness as an entity (Perry, 1912) and in doing so, laid out a set of propositions regarding what does and does not constitute an independent entity. Importantly, Perry here set out a discussion of the relationship between parts and wholes. He argued that while whole entities are dependent on and can be analyzed into their parts, parts are not dependent on wholes; according to the tenets of neo-realism and its focus on analysis, wholes must be analyzed into their constituent parts.

In 1922, Perry also applied his rigorous logic to the notion of the social mind and the possibility of considering the social mind as a collectivity. In this two-part article (Perry, 1922), he argued that the problem of defining the social mind was an important one; it was not, as other

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[15] Later in life, when asked to name and rate the leadership qualities of his mentors, Allport chose Holt as his number one influence, followed by Perry and Langfeld. He rated Holt and Perry both very highly on a number of factors, including warmth, originality, and research abilities. Interestingly, he rated both as having great difficulty in being decisive on controversial issues. Langfeld's ratings were somewhat lower on all positive characteristics, and Allport noted that he seldom worked harder or longer than others and was not particularly warm, funny, or ambitious ("Factors in Psychological Leadership," 1952).

scholars had contended, a minor quibble regarding words. Conceiving of a collectivity as an independent entity has consequences for the ways people feel and behave:

> In accordance with a deeply rooted and apparently inalienable trait, when a man finds himself in the presence of what he calls a person of a higher order, he worships it, or rather him or her. It would make a considerable difference to a man's conduct if he should regard corporations as having souls to save, or a state as having a divinity to worship (1922, p. 565)

In much the same way as he had previously dismissed the notion of the absolute in idealistic philosophy (cf. Perry, 1904), Perry aimed his criticism at the notion of the social mind. Perry did not, however, dismiss the reality of collectivities all together. He noted that society may indeed be logically characterized as a whole, but such a characterization should not provide scholars free reign to confer honorific status upon such wholes. There is, Perry (1922) argued, no difference between a social whole and a row of books and "there is nothing…which exalts a row of books, or impels us to spell it with a capital letter and worship it" (p. 572).

In the second article, however, he considered the more crucial question of whether society is the same kind of compound as an individual; in other words, can we speak of a social mind in the same sense that we speak of an individual mind? Perry concluded that this is true to some extent, but that a social whole is far less unified than an individual. Furthermore, when social wholes do become highly unified, the individuals of which they are comprised suffer in the process. Perry clearly held that groups were inferior to the lone individual:

> In so far as social organizations…approach the single organism in the solidarity of their unity, they debase their members…the whole of each of these originally and potentially human beings would be reduced to being a fraction of some human function. The result

would be to make one man grow where several thousand or million grew before. And the chances are that this sole survivor would be considerably less of a man, same only in stature, than those whom he absorbed" (p. 732).

He concluded that social wholes are indeed wholes, but "they are wholes of a type inferior to the best that is typical of their human members" (p. 734). Perry closed the article by discussing the place of the social mind in the new study of social relations, or the study of "man in the relations which he sustains with others of the same species" (p. 735). Perry argued that to explain the behavior of man in the crowd does not require reference to the "crowd mind." Just as the individual behaves differently on dry land and in water, he behaves differently in the presence of others and in solitude: "A man's behavior is always a function of his environment" (p. 735). In essence, Perry consented to a place for the social mind in social philosophy, but dismissed it from the newly developing field of social psychology.

These two articles illustrate Perry's promotion of individualism in both science and society. The political aspects of his individualistic approach were also evident in earlier pieces written in the context of the First World War, when he criticized the complacency and compliance of American citizens and argued for a more informed citizenry characterized not by empty flag-waving, but by individual expression and rational decision-making (Perry, 1916). In this work, Perry reconsidered the nature of democracy in the context of war and concluded that the central goal of a democratic nation should always be "to promote the happiness and well-being of individual men and women" (p. 26). These conclusions are strikingly similar to the ones that Allport would reach more than two decades later in the context of the Second World War.

Holt and Perry's philosophical writings were part of a larger movement known as New Realism or Neorealism, which was centered primarily at Harvard during the early twentieth century. This movement was very influential for Allport, who noted in 1919:

> through the influence of Professors Perry and Holt, I acquired a deep aversion to all forms of idealism…I have, I think, permanently espoused the epistemology of Neo Realism and lean strongly toward the behavioristic views of psychology which harmonize with that philosophy (Allport, 1919b)

The New Realists stressed an outlook that would come to dominate Allport's work at the end of his graduate career. They pressed for exactitude in philosophy and science through: use of clear definitions of concepts by means of "careful reference to their objective purport" (Holt et al., 1912, p. 22); the analysis of complex entities into simpler entities, and; the replacement of large, indefinable philosophical questions with the explicit formulation of testable propositions. Furthermore, this group of individuals provided a useable philosophical platform for American behaviorism (Leahey, 2000; Mills, 1998; O'Neill, 1968, 1995). A student of both Holt and Perry during the years in which neo-realism developed, Allport absorbed many of these ideas and incorporated them into his behavioristic social psychology. Furthermore, the assault of the New Realists on consciousness and idealism provided a framework for Allport's later assaults on the social mind.

Harvard at War

Aside from his co-authorship of the laboratory manual with Langfeld, Allport's only other publication during his graduate years was a short article published in March of 1917 in a special "war preparedness" issue of the *Harvard Illustrated*. The article, titled "How to Give and Receive Commands: The Psychology of the Raw Recruit," is an odd piece that provides tips on

increasing the efficiency of commanding officers and new recruits, but it does reflect Allport's

training and interests at the time. In this article, one can also see Allport applying the concepts

and methods of classic experimental psychology to the realm of social influence. Allport (1917b)

discussed the difference between sensory and motor responders (cf. Baldwin, 1895) and the ways

in which the performance of each type could be improved. Allport's work on social influence

also finds its way into the article: "Among the facilitating conditions which the officer should

understand, the social influence is very important…We do better work when we are aware that

our movements are synchronous with those of our comrades." He therefore recommended that

officers should march in "columns of squads" rather than in "double file" (p. 34).

Three months after writing about the raw recruit, Allport would become one himself. In

1917, one month after the United States entered World War I, Allport left the Harvard

Laboratory and entered first officer's training camp in Plattsburgh, New York. Plattsburgh, like

most training camps instituted during the War, was a society in and of itself; recruits were

provided with various forms of entertainment including lounges, cinemas, and local civilian and

soldier performers, the purpose of which was to entertain the recruits, but also to discourage

prostitution and drinking (Ellis, 1916; Keene, 2006). After three months of training, he was

commissioned as Second Lieutenant in the Artillery Section of the Officers Reserve Corps and

learned he would shortly be shipped overseas. Prior to leaving the United States, Allport married

Ethel Margaret Hudson.[16] In 1920, he recalled his wartime marriage as somewhat hasty: "A

sudden madness seizes me. I write a poem and then rush into matrimony, just three days avant de

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[16] Allport likely met Hudson back in Ohio. She was born in Akron, Ohio in 1893 ("Ohio Births and Christenings, 1800-1962").

partir! I decide to live if possible; if not, to die beautifully" (Allport, 1920a, p. 6). Although the

marriage indeed survived for twenty years, the couple eventually divorced in 1937.[17]

From the fall of 1917 until the spring of 1918, Allport served in France, taking up various

positions including Instructor in Artillery Communication, balloon observer, and assistant

regimental adjutant (Allport, 1919b). He received the *Croix de Guerre* from the French Army

Corps when he parachuted from an observation balloon that had been attacked by German

artillery fire. However, he describes these years as "on the whole uneventful" (Allport, 1974, p.

4). Like so many other American soldiers in France (Kennedy, 2004), Allport seems to have

participated in very little combat; as he noted in 1919, he was "involved in nothing but the noise"

(Allport, 1919b, p. 6). He did, however, experience the highly regimented and hierarchical nature

of military life and the constant propaganda promoting "the cause" (Kennedy, 2004), both of

which undoubtedly conflicted with his early leanings towards individualism (cf. Allport, 1919b).

Allport returned to the United States in May and served as a radio instructor at Camp Jackson in

South Carolina. In September, he was promoted to First Lieutenant and after a brief stint in

Michigan doing liaison work, he was discharged in January of 1919 (Allport, 1920a). He

returned to Harvard and resumed his studies, completing his dissertation studies and his Ph.D.

the following June.

<div align="center">The Beginnings of Social Facilitation Research</div>

Allport's affiliation with Hugo Münsterberg may have been short and perhaps as Allport

later recalled not particularly congenial (Allport, 1974), but it would have a direct impact on the

focus of his work for many years to come. It was Münsterberg that suggested the topic of

Allport's doctoral dissertation, *The social influence: An experimental study of the effect of the*

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[17] Allport later noted that he was "not well adjusted" in his first marriage, a situation that he believed hampered his career ("Factors in Psychological Leadership," 1952).

group upon individual mental processes (Allport, 1919c). When Allport began his work on the

social psychology of the individual and the group, there was little experimental research in the

area. Perhaps the earliest and most well-known experiment on what would later be labeled

"social facilitation" was published in 1898 by Norman Triplett (Davis, Huss, & Becker, 2009).

Triplett (1898) became interested in the presence of spectators and coactors[18] on the performance

of cyclists. Data provided to Triplett by the Racing Board of the League of American Wheelmen

indicated that cyclists completed races more quickly in the presence of other coacting

competitors or pacers, as compared to when they completed the race alone. In order to test these

effects experimentally, Triplett (1898) devised an experiment where children were required to

reel in silk cords on fishing reels as quickly as possible either alone or in the presence of a

coactor. All participants used the reels to wind the same amount of cord and Triplett used a

kymograph to record curves representing the speed of their actions and a stopwatch to determine

the amount of time required to complete the task. Triplett found that children completed the task

more quickly when they worked in the presence of coactors than when they worked alone.[19]

Based on these findings, he concluded that "the bodily presence of another contestant

participating simultaneously in the race serves to liberate latent energy not ordinarily available"

(Triplett, 1898, p. 533).

Scholars have frequently associated the beginnings of social facilitation research, and

experimental social psychology more generally, with Triplett's work (Bond & Titus, 1983;

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[18] The word *coactors* is used to refer to individuals performing an activity alongside another individual who is also performing that same activity. The two do not work together, nor are they explicitly placed in a competitive situation. This is different from *spectators*, who are present when an individual performs a task but they do not perform the task alongside the individual (Bond & Titus, 1983; Dashiell, 1935).
[19] Strube (2005) reanalyzed Triplett's original data and found that in fact Triplett's findings were not statistically significant and furthermore, that they were compromised by a number of factors. Taking all of these things into account, Strube concluded that, by modern standards, Triplett actually found little evidence of social facilitation.

Guérin, 1993).[20] However, the largest and perhaps most influential body of early work in this area came out of Germany in the early twentieth century. Interestingly, German research into the influence of coactors on individual behavior was driven in large part by experimental pedagogy, and more specifically, by a desire to understand the effectiveness of homework for schoolchildren (Burnham, 1905, 1910).[21] German teachers and scholars had begun conducting experiments examining how well academic tasks were completed in the home environment versus the school environment. Early studies demonstrated that students working at home in solitude made more errors on arithmetic tasks, but performed much better when writing essays (Burnham, 1905). Others scholars were not interested in homework per se, but rather in the effectiveness of the classroom environment. Specifically, they were interested in whether students completed their work more effectively when surrounded by their peers in the classroom or when working alone in the classroom (Burnham, 1905). These studies demonstrated that, when working in the presence of their peers, students completed their work more quickly and their work was of a higher quality. However, when students were told to take their time and work carefully, students working in isolation performed better than those working in the presence of others.

Not all of the research on the individual-in-the-group phenomena arose in the classroom. German psychologist Ernst Meumann's work on the problem in 1904 is said to have arisen from his accidental interruption of a subject working with an ergograph (Burnham, 1905). He noticed that when he was in the room, the subject performed more efficiently. This surreptitious finding

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[20] The validity of Triplett's work as representing the "first" social-psychological experiment or the "first" experiment on social facilitation will not be discussed here (see Danziger, 2000; Haines & Vaughn, 1979). I will briefly state, however, that while the experiment was surely not the first to suggest that a group presence affects the individual (i.e., mere presence effects), it may have been the first to directly examine the effect of a *coacting* group on individual performance.

[21] All of these early studies were conducted in Germany and have not been translated. I have therefore relied on secondary sources to describe them. Burnham (1905) outlines each study in detail. Further summaries of the findings can be found in Allport (1924), Jahoda (2007), and Dashiell (1935).

led him to the schools, where he examined students' performance in the presence of the group, in the presence of the teacher, and in solitude. He too found that students were less productive when working in solitude. When children were asked whether they would prefer to work alone or in the classroom, only a small minority of "sensitive, nervous, or weak children" (Burnham, 1905, p. 221) chose solitude.

In general, these studies had reached a consensus regarding the utility of homework. Homework was not desirable unless the task at hand was one that required higher mental capacities such as imagination and judgment. Meumann therefore recommended that homework was generally undesirable.[22] However, these studies had also revealed a novel way of conceptualizing the individual in the group. As Burnham (1905) explains:

> pupils in a class are in a sort of mental *rapport*; they hear, see, and know continually what the others are doing, and thus real class work is not a mere case of individuals working together and their performance the summation of the work of many individuals; but there is a sort of class spirit, so that in the full sense of the word one can speak of a group performance which may be compared with an individual performance. The pupils are members of a community of workers. The individual working by himself is a different person (p. 220)

In many ways, this research therefore provided a novel way of conceptualizing the relationship between the individual and the group as well as popular and important nineteenth-century concepts such as *mental rapport*, the group mind, and the crowd.

Early social facilitation research was continued in early twentieth-century Germany by Walther Moede (1888-1958), a student of Wilhelm Wundt, who went on to become a central

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[22] Interestingly, these findings were used by Burnham and other progressive intellectuals as part of what Gill and Schlossman (1996) describe as an "antihomework crusade" that swept the United States in the early twentieth century.

figure in the history of applied psychology. As early as 1914, Moede had begun a series of

studies examining the performance of individuals in the presence of co-acting groups of various

sizes (Allport, 1924a; Danziger, 2000; Dashiell, 1935; Jahoda, 2007).[23] Moede varied the nature

of the psychological processes measured (e.g., attention, memory, word association), the size of

the group, as well as the nature of the situation (e.g., mere presence of others vs. others in

competition with the individual). Moede's findings were varied; for example, he found that

tapping speed increased when coactors were present, but only for those participants that were

significantly slow at the task to begin with. Furthermore, the presence of a coactor with inferior

abilities led to performance detriments. As with the studies conducted by other German scholars,

Moede found that the presence of coactors leads sometimes to performance benefits and

sometimes to detriments. Nonetheless, this research added to the growing consensus that social

actors could be viewed as experimental social stimuli.

As Danziger (2000) has noted, Moede's work on social facilitation was different from the

work of Triplett or those working in experimental pedagogy because he was primarily a

psychologist interested in institutionalizing the study of experimental crowd psychology. His

work was not intended to solve a particular practical problem and it constituted more than a loose

collection of related experiments; Moede was attempting to extend the principles of experimental

psychology to the study of the crowd. In his 1920 work, Moede eventually abandoned

experimental social psychology and turned towards applied psychology, applying his findings on

the individual-in-the-group to industrial psychology. Nonetheless, his work, and particularly his

methodology, had a lasting impact on the field of American social psychology through the work

of Allport.

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[23] The experiments were eventually published in a book titled *Experimental Crowd Psychology: A Contribution to Experimental Group Psychology*. Unfortunately, the work has not been translated from German and I have relied on secondary sources to describe its contents.

Münsterberg's suggestion for Allport's dissertation undoubtedly arose from these studies conducted in Germany, as well as from his own work in industrial psychology. It is quite likely that Münsterberg followed Moede's work, since both men were students of Wundt and both were beginning their work on applied psychology in the early 1900s.[24] Münsterberg also followed studies in experimental pedagogy, providing an overview of them in his text, *Psychology: General and Applied.* His interest in education was closely linked to his interest in industrial efficiency; both were rooted in the idea of a perfect fit between the person and the environment and the provision of an environment that generally produces maximum efficiency. In his discussions of industrial psychology, Münsterberg (1914b) considered every aspect of the industrial situation, including the color of the workers' surroundings, noise, and the quality and quantity of stimuli presented to the worker, as potential factors in the efficiency of the worker. Münsterberg's suggestion of an examination of coactors as situational factors affecting individual performance was therefore likely drawn largely from his familiarity with experimental pedagogy and his interest in industrial efficiency.

Allport's (1919c) dissertation, *The social influence: An experimental study of the effect of the group upon individual mental processes*, outlined a number of studies that examined the effects of coactors on individual performance. The template for all of these experiments was generally the same: subjects completed a task alone and then completed the same task in the presence of other individuals working independently at the same task. The quantity and quality of the work completed was then used as a measure of the influence of the group on individual performance. The term s*ocial increment* was used to refer to an increase in the quantity of individual work done in the presence of coacting others, while *social decrement* referred to a

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[24] It is questionable how much of Moede's work Allport actually read. Allport was able to read German with slight difficulty (Allport, 1919b) , but in his 1924 text, Allport does not discuss Moede's 1920 book on experimental crowd psychology. Instead he refers only to Moede's 1914 article on competition (cf. Danziger, 2000).

decrease in quantity. *Social supervaluence* referred to an increase in the quality of work done in the presence of coacting others, while *social subvaluence* referred to a decrease in the quality of work done in coacting situations. Allport measured these outcomes across a variety of tasks, manipulating only the presence or absence of others. The tasks involved free association, vowel cancellation, multiplication, analysis of philosophical passages, reversible perspectives tests, and judgments of odors and weights. His conclusions across all of the studies were based on mean differences between the two conditions and his interpretations of the findings were directed primarily by the post-study introspective comments of his subjects.

From the start, Allport's work on the social seemed to indicate to him that the individual's intellectual abilities were hampered by the group. He generally found evidence of a social increment in performance; subjects produced more free associations, completed more multiplication items, and provided more arguments against philosophical passages when they were in the presence of coacting others. Allport attributed this to *social facilitation*, "which consists of an increase of response merely from the sight or sound of others making the same movements" (Allport, 1924a, p. 262). In terms of the quality of performance, however, Allport found evidence of social subvaluence; although subjects produced more in the presence of others, their work was of lower quality. For example, they made more errors on the multiplication tests and provided less sophisticated arguments against philosophical passages. In short, the presence of a group increased the quantity but not the quality of individual work. This notion—that the group somehow lessens the capabilities of the individual—came to permeate his work.

Allport also conducted an additional series of experiments examining the effects of coacting others on individual judgment. In these experiments, subjects were presented with a

series of odors ranging from very unpleasant to very pleasant and they rated the pleasantness of the odor. Subjects made these judgments alone and in coacting groups. Allport found that, when making judgments in the presence of others, subjects' judgments were less extreme. The same experiments were repeated with judgments of weights as the dependent variable and the same findings emerged; subjects avoided extreme judgments in the presence of coacting others.

Allport reported his dissertation findings first in 1919 at the annual meeting of the American Psychological Association, which was held at Harvard.[25] The following year, he summarized some of them for an article appearing in the *Journal of Experimental Psychology* (Allport, 1920b). Aside from Triplett's studies, Allport's were the first of this kind in North America. They also differed from the work done in Germany in that Allport employed adult subjects as opposed to children; this difference was a significant one, given that children were thought to be much more susceptible to social influences (cf Allport, 1924a). Furthermore, Allport's experiments were much more systematic, conforming to the ideals of laboratory experimentation emphasized at the time. For example, he implemented counterbalancing techniques to avoid practice effects and fatigue, he took great care to standardize all aspects of the experiment to exclude extraneous variables, and tried to eliminate potential confounding variables such as feelings of rivalry or competition.[26] In addition, Allport's dissertation conformed wholeheartedly to the implicit standards and accepted experimental philosophies and practices of early twentieth-century American psychology. As Ash (2003) has noted, these

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[25] Allport's paper was presented in a session for "Social and Applied Psychology." The content of this symposium is indicative of the state of social psychology in 1919: Allport's paper was the only one that dealt specifically with social psychology; the remainder all dealt with applied work done on individual testing (Gates, 1920).

[26] This is not to say, however, that there were no problems with the methods by current standards. Allport used the same 26 subjects in all of his experiments, with less than 15 being employed in each experiment. In some of the free association experiments, only 3 subjects participated. Furthermore, many of these subjects were graduate students, many of whom likely had some insight into his purposes. For example, his brother Gordon served as one of the participants.

practices included the use of the word *experimental*, the restriction of subject matter to those topics that could be addressed using experimental methods, and the use of rhetoric that emphasized an explicit separation of science and philosophy.

Allport's work on social facilitation was well-received and sparked interest in the area, giving rise to a number of experiments on the influence of the presence of others on individual performance and behavior. Current scholars have rightfully traced the history of social facilitation and conformity research back to Allport (Guérin, 1993) and there is little doubt that he indeed opened up new vistas of research in these areas. However, Allport's early research provided much more than a new topic of study for social psychology; it also contributed to a new problem-oriented and seemingly cumulative laboratory approach to studying the social, one that could be replicated. Allport's findings were extended to include the effect of audiences (Gates, 1924; Travis, 1925) and the impact of the experimenter's presence (Ekdahl, 1929). The impact of individual differences in intelligence on social facilitation was examined (Anderson, 1929; Weston & English, 1926), and the research was extended to diverse populations (Travis, 1928). Throughout all of this research, several new problems were identified based on previous findings and each new experiment generally represented a manipulation slightly different from that used in previous experiments. In addition, Allport provided a new kind of exemplar for social psychology—one focused on studying the behavior of the individual in relation to social stimuli. This focus on behavior was new for a field that had struggled to find a definable, discernible unit of analysis. The influence of Allport's early experiments therefore seems to have been two-fold:

he opened up a new area of research devoted to the various forms of inter-individual influence

and he provided an adaptable exemplar for the experimental study of social behavior.[27]

<div style="text-align:center">Conclusion</div>

Six months after completing his doctoral degree at Harvard, Allport published his first

academic article, which served as his first definitive statement on the science of social

psychology. In "Behavior and experiment in social psychology," Allport (1919a) drew a clear

line of separation between the social psychology of the past and that of the future. Armed with

the philosophies of his Harvard mentors and his own experimental findings, he proposed a new

era in the study of social psychology:

> The time has come to abandon speculations about types of groups, social organization,
>
> self and crowd consciousness, instinct and imitation. When social psychologists focus
>
> their attention upon the behavior of the individual under direct and incidental stimulation
>
> from the behavior of others, then the most vital questions of the social order will find
>
> their solution (p. 305)

Social psychology, Allport argued, must follow in the footsteps of general psychology, which

had broken with its "rationalistic" and "pre-experimental" past. In this article, Allport—drawing

on Holt's arguments about individual consciousness—cast aside the notion of social psychology

as the study of group mind or social consciousness and instead presented it as the study of the

distinct and repeated responses of the individual to the social aspects of the environment. Like

"consciousness," the "social mind" could be reformulated as a behavioral response, thereby

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[27] Perhaps the strongest (but least acknowledged) impact of Allport's facilitation research was the attention it drew to the influence of the experimenter on subjects' behaviors. In extensions of his work, researchers began to realize that the presence of the experimenter in the "alone" condition altered behavior and was enough to produce a facilitating effect. Long before Robert Rosenthal and his colleagues formalized research on the social psychology of the psychological experiment, researchers were well aware of the artificiality of their findings. As Luther Lee Bernard stated in 1931: "The process of the experiment brings a new and powerful set of conditioning factors into the situation, with the result that the responses of the person who is the subject of the experiment are not necessarily made to the stimuli set for him, but to those set about him as controls" (p. 74).

making it measurable and observable. Employing the analytic, reductionist approach of his mentors, Allport argued for a social psychology focused on the "elementary facts" that characterize social aggregates; those elementary facts, he argued, are inter-individual stimulation and response. All previous contributions to the discipline were dismissed: "True social psychology is a science of the future; its data are at present unrecorded" (p. 297).

When Allport completed his graduate work in 1919, he had been strongly affected by the ideas and approaches of his Harvard mentors. Allport's doctoral studies and his years in the Harvard Psychological Laboratory had clearly provided him with a solid understanding of and appreciation for contemporary experimental methods. His friendship with leading members of the New Realist school provided him with a philosophical framework characterized by reductionism and a firm commitment to objectivity and behaviorist principles. Perhaps most importantly, Allport's years at Harvard left him with the firm belief that this approach, which had come to dominate experimental psychology, could also be fruitfully applied to the developing field of social psychology.

Chapter 3

The "Struggle for Supremacy:" Allport and the Establishment of an Individualistic Social Psychology

The years following Allport's completion of his doctorate were busy ones, rife with personal and professional change and productivity. Though Allport's plans had included remaining at Harvard to take a faculty position (Allport, 1920a),[28] he was never offered one. Instead, he served as an instructor at Harvard and Radcliffe—teaching social, experimental, child, and comparative psychology—until 1922 when his teaching position was not reinstated (Allport, n.d.). During that year, major changes were made in the Department when E. G. Boring was hired and according to Allport (1974), he was asked to leave the department.[29] Allport then went to the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, where he took a position as Associate Professor of Psychology. He remained at Chapel Hill until 1924, when, with a recommendation from sociologist Franklin H. Giddings, he was offered a position as Professor of Social and Political Psychology at the Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs at Syracuse University (Allport, 1974). In addition to these geographical changes, Allport and his wife also started and completed their family; by 1924, he and Ethel had three children: Edward, Dorothy, and Floyd (Allport, 1941). The growth of his family, however, coincided with loss: in 1923, Allport would deal with the death of his father (Deaths, 1923), to whom he would later dedicate his famed 1924 textbook, *Social Psychology.*

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[28] Allport noted in his entry in the Harvard college class records in 1920, "Am an instructor, an aspirant to a definite seat on the faculty — sometime — but that's up to President Lowell" (Allport, 1920a, p. 7).

[29] One of Allport's mentors, Herbert Langfeld, also left the Department at this time. He was asked to reduce his position to half-time. He refused, choosing instead to take a position at Princeton, where he became the Director of the Psychological Laboratory (Allport, 1974). It is unclear why Allport was asked to leave. Historian Sam Parkovnick has indicated in personal communications that when Boring's position replaced Langfeld's, Allport's position was also replaced by a faculty member who arrived with Boring. I have not examined the E. G. Boring papers, which likely hold the answer. It is interesting to note that Floyd's brother Gordon was offered a position at Harvard in 1929. Gordon remained at Harvard for the remainder of his career (Nicholson, 2003).

Despite these noteworthy changes, Allport's postgraduate years were productive ones that marked him as a significant figure in the newly emerging field of social psychology. By 1924, he was described by one scholar as "one of the outstanding figures among the younger American psychologists" (Wells, 1924, p. 441). He began presenting his work at prominent conferences, including the meetings of the American Psychological Association, the International Congress of Psychology, and the American Sociological Association. He also began publishing work on social psychology, motivation, personality, and other topics in a variety of prominent journals. In 1921, he became coeditor of the *Journal of Abnormal Psychology and Social Psychology,* serving as the expert on social psychology while Morton Prince served as the expert on abnormal psychology. And of course, in 1923, he completed a textbook on social psychology that became the standard guide for the emerging field.

As many historians have noted, Allport's textbook was widely successful, helping to institutionalize social psychology in American colleges and universities. Upon its release in 1924, the text was described by Harry Hollingworth as "one of the most significant books in psychology published in recent years;" by Lewis Terman as "the best general text in its line;" by Kimball Young as "the most adequate textbook with which to introduce the students into the subject of social psychology;" and by J. R. Kantor as "by far and away the best book that I have yet seen on this subject." Furthermore, the book was one of eight social science books chosen by the American Library Association as the most important books of the year (Houghton Mifflin,

March 24, 1926). By 1929, approximately fifty schools were making use of the text in various courses (Houghton Mifflin, January 25, 1929).[30]

The text, however, was also highly polemical. In it and in his other works during this period, Allport's promoted a narrow view of social psychology that focused on the individual and critiqued the approaches of those studying social groups. Crafted initially in the context of his behaviorist, experimentalist, anti-idealist training, and fueled further by strong critiques of his work, throughout the 1920s Allport waged an almost fanatical war on collective concepts prevalent in the social scientific literature. The group mind, crowds, publics, the social oversoul, the general will, and the social organism all came under attack. In a now infamous excerpt from his text, *Social Psychology*, Allport (1924a) dismissed the group as a valid object of scientific social psychology: "There is no psychology of groups which is not essentially and entirely a psychology of individuals…There is likewise no consciousness except that belonging to individuals. Psychology in all its branches is a science of the individual" (p. 4). Within ten years of obtaining his doctoral degree, Allport had written no less than ten articles, a significant number of book reviews and critiques, and his textbook—all of which argued for the banishment of the group concept from the realm of social psychology.

As was noted in the introduction to this work, histories of social psychology frequently provide the impression that Allport's social psychology was well-received, conforming to the *Zeitgeist* of early twentieth-century social science and providing a solid platform for an uncertain field. While the work was indeed well-received among most psychologists, it is also important to

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[30] In a different vein, the book was also described as "obscene, vile, and vicious" by a Florida citizens' committee in 1927 because "many of the passages relating to sex were highly obscene." The committee, named the Florida Purity League, was seeking to have it removed from the libraries of the Florida State College for Women at Tallahassee and the University of Florida at Gainesville. Other authors charged included G. Stanley Hall, George Bernard Shaw, Freud, and Upton Sinclair (Excerpt from American Mercury, 1927). More recent scholarship indicates that the group also opposed the evolutionary framework employed in many of these works (Faunce, 1975).

recognize that Allportian individualism caused considerable controversy in the social sciences and responses to it were not all laudatory. Allport's denouncements of the group concept reverberated throughout the emerging discipline, resulting in what sociologist Luther Lee Bernard described as a "struggle for supremacy" (Bernard, 1924a, p. 739). In a 1924 review of the field, Bernard noted that two major struggles were occurring in the field of social psychology. Initially, "it was McDougall against the whole field in the matter of the instinctivist brand of social psychology. In the second struggle for supremacy, it is almost equally the whole field against Allport" (p. 739). Indeed, in the years following the publication of Allport's *Social Psychology,* Allport bore the brunt of much criticism, most of it aimed at his extreme objectivism and his polemics against collective concepts. In his 1974 autobiography, he recalled that his assault on the sociological conception of the group mind and collective consciousness drew widespread criticism, noting "I became known as the whipping boy of the sociologists" (p. 16).

The impact of Allport's work during the 1920s is very much rooted in his 1924 textbook, which differed significantly from its predecessors. In this work, Allport provided social psychologists with a template for experimental, individualist social psychology and supplied a manual for teaching this new template to incoming students. However, Allport's work during this period contributed to the development of social psychology in a second and equally important way: by discouraging collaboration or cooperation between social and behavioral scientists. Through scathing book reviews, conference presentations, and journal articles, Allport contributed to increased hostility between the two groups and his extremist views may have perhaps made intellectual differences between the disciplines seem insurmountable. The divergence of sociologically and psychologically oriented forms of social psychology—noted repeated by scholars throughout the twentieth century (Stryker, 1977; Thoits, 1995)—therefore

began to take shape in the 1920s, fuelled in large part by debates that arose in the context of Allport's promotion of an individualistic social psychology.

Textbook Social Psychology

In 1924, textbooks on social psychology were few and far between. In fact, books of any sort bearing the titled "social psychology" were rare before the 1930s. James Mark Baldwin's *Social and Ethical Interpretations in Mental Development* was an exception, bearing the subtitle *A Study in Social Psychology.* Similarly, American sociologist William I. Thomas's book *Sex and Society* was subtitled *Studies in the Social Psychology of Sex.* Neither of these works, however, was written with the aim of defining a new field of study or determining the boundaries of an existing one. Baldwin (1897b) did note that he wanted to provide a book specifically on social psychology "which can be used in the universities in connection with courses in psychology, ethics, and social science" (p. viii-iv). However, his intent was to explore the social aspects of individual development as well as the individual aspects of societal continuity and change using the principles of genetic or developmental psychology. Though Baldwin explored the development of sociality extensively, the phrase "social psychology" appears only a handful of times in the book and is never defined or explained. Instead, French explorations of suggestibility and imitation are described in passing as being the exemplar of good social psychological work. The reader is left with little sense of what is meant by the phrase. Thomas's (1907) work is not even remotely concerned with carving out a field of study; in fact, the phrase "social psychology" does not appear anywhere in the book except the title. Thomas's intent was to examine differences between the sexes, driven by the argument that they are due to both biology and custom, and demonstrating how they give rise to different forms of social organization. Although the two authors proceed in very different fashions, both Baldwin and

Thomas explore the ways in which biological and psychological foundations give rise to a variety of social forms and processes. Readers of these two texts are left with the idea that psychology and biology must address the social aspects of individual development and action, but neither book suggested a field of study for that distinct purpose.

Though the definition of social psychology continued to be debated in the periodical literature in the early twentieth century, no serious attempts were made to define it as a new field of study until 1908, when two books appeared almost simultaneously: Edward A. Ross's *Social Psychology* in June and William McDougall's *Introduction to Social Psychology* in October. As many scholars have noted, these two textbooks presented two very different versions of or approaches to social psychology (G. Allport, 1968; Bar-Tal, 2006; Cartwright, 1979; Pepitone, 1981). For Ross (1908), social psychology was the study of "planes and currents that come into existence among men in consequence of their association" (p. 1). These planes and currents included phenomena such as mobs, fashions, customs, and public opinion. Ross asks, for example, what is a crowd? How do crowds form? What psychological aspects of the individual facilitate crowd behavior? For Ross, these kinds of uniformities in thought, feeling, and behavior resulting from association are all the more interesting because they overpower the diversity that arises from heredity: "the individuality each has received from the hand of nature is largely effaced, and we find people gathered into great planes of uniformity" (p. 1). It was the task of the social psychologist, he suggested, to describe and explain these uniformities resulting from association. By doing so, the social psychologist explains society, since social forms are the result of psychological processes such as imitation, invention, and association. In some respects, Ross's view was similar to that of Baldwin, as it was rooted in French research on suggestion and imitation and it examined society as resulting from individual psychological processes.

Ross's view of the field was very different from that expressed by McDougall in his *Introduction to Social Psychology.* For McDougall (1908), the social was not something that arose despite heredity; instead, social forms developed out of specific innate tendencies. The task of the field, therefore, was to determine how society and social aspects of individual cognition, emotion, and behavior developed from the "native propensities and capacities of the individual human mind" (p. 15). Understanding these basic propensities was a necessary precursor for a new science of social psychology and McDougall considered his book as a "propadeutic" for social psychology outlining the "fundamental tendencies of the human mind" (p. 265). McDougall's book covered territory that was familiar for early twentieth century psychologists, including instincts, volition, consciousness, and emotions. His outlook was also one that would have appeal for psychologists, since he suggested that psychology was in fact the basis of all social sciences, given that the social world was rooted in the springs, motives, and impulses of human conduct. McDougall was highly critical of brands of psychology that focused on analyzing consciousness and intellectual processes such as ideation, conception, or comparison. Instead, he—like many other early twentieth-century psychologists—advocated a psychology that was separate from philosophy and rooted in evolutionary processes.

In many respects, both Ross's and McDougall's texts were highly successful. Both works went through several editions and were widely reviewed and cited in the literature. Nonetheless, for a variety of reasons, both ultimately failed to become the standard textbook for the emerging field of social psychology. The central critique of Ross's text concerned his reliance on anecdotal evidence and his use of florid prose. Ross's text indeed lacked the simplicity, directness, and summary nature of a typical textbook. As reviewers of the text would note, 117 out of 366 pages of the work consisted of lengthy quotations from drama, literature, and history (Mussey, 1909;

Vincent, 1909) and Ross's evidence was almost always offered in a manner not readily verified; proof is offered in the form of statements such as "It is said that…" or "The experienced orator knows that…" (cf Ross, 1908, p. 44). One reviewer seemed to enjoy Ross's literary style, but noted that many sociologists were "beginning to fear that he is going too far, and is sacrificing clearness and sometimes exactness to the striking, the vivid, and the picturesque" (Vincent, 1909). Another bemoaned the heavy quotations, and described the work as "written far too largely with scissors and a paste pot" (Mussey, 1909, p. 254).[31]

Though Ross's florid prose was the most common point of criticism, the reviewers also expressed a general discontent with the abstract, intellectualist approach that permeated the work. Reviewers noted that while the book included long descriptions of phenomena that were of interest to the psychologist, it lacked a certain in-depth style of analysis sought after by psychologists. Margaret Floy Washburn (1908) noted that in reading the book, "the psychologist feels the lack of any true psychological analysis…there is a tendency to rest satisfied with showing the causes of the psychic phenomena treated instead of dissecting the phenomena themselves" (p. 666). James Hayden Tufts (1909) similarly pointed out that while the work was highly descriptive, there was no discussion of causal relationships and because of this "explanation must be cut short in an unsatisfactory fashion" (p. 360). Others simply noted that the book did not fit well with the conventions of psychological textbook writing of the time. Charles Ellwood pointed out, "It does not begin with a summary of present knowledge concerning the psychology of the individual" (Ellwood, 1908a, p. 381), but instead follows the older tradition laid out by Tarde and the crowd psychologists. Ellwood also argued that the

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[31] It should be noted that Ross's book was positively reviewed by Lester Ward, who applauded the continuity with the Tardean approach. Ward viewed Ross's approach as a welcome alternative to psychological approaches to social life, which he characterized as "so loaded with a mass of technical terms, borrowed from their psychological jargon…the reader's mental stomach is so turned by their pedantic iteration that it is incapable of following what little thought they may represent" (Ward, 1908, p. 55).

subject matter was simply not appropriate for beginner students who "should be put upon more tangible and concrete problems than those afforded by suggestion and imitation, custom and convention" (Ellwood, 1908b, p. 238). The work, it seemed, was part of an outdated nineteenth-century tradition that was no longer the preferred approach in the study of the individual and the social world.[32]

McDougall's introduction to the field initially fared much better among social and behavioral scientists. It was described as "original and important" (Sorley, 1908, p. 418),"an indispensable text-book" (Granger, 1909, p. 515), and marked by "considerable originality and definiteness of presentation" (Leuba, 1909, p. 289). McDougall was praised for taking a psychological approach to understanding the social (Ellwood, 1909), but it should be noted that the phrase "social psychology" almost never appears in any of the reviews of the book (cf Marshall, 1910; Solomon, 1915). As Rudmin (1985) rightly points out, the work was hardly considered a book on social psychology, but rather as a work on the role of instincts in individual behavior. McDougall himself never meant it as a textbook on social psychology; instead, it was written as part of a projected series of semi-popular scientific works. As McDougall described it in his autobiography: "I had no thought that it might be used as a college textbook. I wrote for the general public" (McDougall, 1930, p. 208). It is not surprising that reviewers (and likely most readers) viewed and wrote about the book as a treatise on instincts rather than a treatise on social psychology.

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[32] In his 1936 autobiography, Ross nonchalantly accepted that his version of social psychology had not come to be the dominant one, noting that "what has come to be called 'social psychology' in this country now deals with the psyche, not so much of groups or collectivities as of individuals developing in a social setting and interacting constantly with others." He went on to note that though his approach dissipated, "I am content. I lift my hat to such 'stout fellahs' as Dewey, Mead, Cooley, Veblen, Thomas, Park, Burgess, Young, Allport, Krueger, Reckless, Bernard, Folsom, Bogardus and Brown, creators of the *other* social psychology. But *didn't* I have a run for my money?" (Ross, 1936, p. 114).

Though McDougall's work received praise from some quarters, it came under increasing scrutiny and attack in the early decades of the twentieth century as the mechanistic, objectivist framework began to dominate early twentieth-century American psychology (O'Donnell, 1985). This was due in part to McDougalls promotion of *hormic psychology*, a brand of psychology that sought to describe and explain behavior teleologically, in terms of the organism's purposes or ends (Innis, 2003). This purposive behaviorism, combined with McDougall's defense of animism, was antithetical to mechanistic explanations of behavior rooted in the language of stimulus and response. As Innis (2003) explains, McDougall also maintained and pursued interests in a variety of unconventional topics including Lamarckian evolution and psychic phenomenon; his forays into these areas "made his more conventional ideas suspect" (p. 107).

McDougall's approach, built on the foundation of innate tendencies, stood little chance in the climate of early twentieth century American psychology. The influence of Watsonian behaviorism spread quickly, from the relatively tame version espoused in 1914 to the much more extreme, radical version presented in 1925 (Watson, 1914, 1925). The new approach filled newspapers, lecture halls, and text books by the 1920s and in 1924, it was the subject of a public debate between Watson and McDougall, who had exchanged critical commentary in periodicals since Watson had begun popularizing it around 1915. Though McDougall is said to have won the debate by a margin of 20 votes (Larson, 1979), behaviorism continued to remain dominant, while McDougall's views came under increasing attack.

The central point of disagreement with McDougall's approach to social psychology was the emphasis placed on the role of instincts in human behavior. Many viewed McDougall's instincts as reminiscent of the old faculty psychology; like the concept of faculties, instincts seemed to serve as convenient labels that provided a method of side-stepping in-depth

explanations of behavior (Allport, 1919a; Field, 1921). It was also argued that much of what was

described as instinctive could in fact be shown to have been acquired (Allport, 1920c, Bernard,

1924b, Kantor, 1920). Some indeed suggested that the concepts of instincts should be altogether

abandoned (Kuo, 1921), while others held that at the very least, the concept required a serious

rethinking and much more refined conceptualization (Dunlap, 1919). Throughout the early

decades of the twentieth century, instincts were the subject of much controversy, particularly in

relation to the development of social psychology. As McDougall noted, by 1921, attempts to

understand social behavior in terms of instincts "provoked a violent reaction, and hardly a week

passes without the appearance of some article which attacks these attempts, pours scorn or

ridicule upon them, and proposes to repudiate completely the notion of Instinct in Man"

(McDougall, 1921, p. 285). Though scholars would continue to debate the relative effects of

heredity and environment, formulations built upon the foundation of specific instincts fell out of

favor during the 1920s. This included McDougall's *Social Psychology.* Both his work and Ross's

seemed to have been classified as outdated, belonging to an earlier period in psychology's

history.

A few more books on social psychology appeared in the period following the publication

of Ross's and McDougall's work. Some of them were not actual textbooks, but rather syllabi or

suggested readings for the field (Bogardus, 1917; Howard, 1910); the diversity of the readings,

which ranged from Plato and Tocqueville to Tarde and Ross, demonstrates the broad spectrum of

the field in the early 1900s. Other monographs were intended as textbooks (Bogardus, 1920;

Ellwood, 1917; Gault, 1923) and some books published during this period would perhaps be

better categorized as studies in social psychology rather than textbooks introducing or outlining

the field (Dewey, 1922; Williams, 1922). Reviews of these works point to a slowly emerging but

unmistakable trend in the field: the move towards an objectivist, scientific social psychology rooted in the language, principles, and methods of physiology, the natural sciences more generally, and the emerging study of behavior and adjustment. Works that conformed to this framework were applauded while those that favored other approaches were dismissed or critiqued.

Bogardus's (1920) work was critiqued for its appeal to authority as evidence and its reliance on "outworn conceptions" such as imitation and instinct (G. Allport, 1922, p. 106). Williams (1922) was similarly critiqued for his emphasis on instincts and his lack of attention to the results of laboratory psychology, which according to the reviewer was indicative of the author's lack of awareness of "how much water has passed under the bridge" (Dickinson, 1923, p. 370). Another reviewer characterized it as "untechnical and popular in tone" (Marett, 1923, p. 388).[33] Dewey's *Human Nature and Social Conduct: An Introduction to Social Psychology* was positively reviewed, but it was not intended as a textbook on social psychology and does not read as an introduction for beginner students. Instead, Dewey (1922) outlines the relationships between impulses and the social environment in relation to habits, intelligence, custom, and other common psychological concepts. Reviews of this work, however, also provide insight into what was wanted of a new social psychology: Dewey was critiqued for failing to include a discussion of neurophysiological processes as well as for his lack of attention to the exact mechanisms of habit formation within the individual (Cason, 1924). The work was described as "not technical nor deeply analytical, but commonsense and descriptive," which "makes more difficult the task of the psychologist" (Brunswick, 1923, p. 73).

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[33] It is important to note that many of these reviews were written by scholars outside of psychology, including economists, ethicists, and others. Nonetheless, they represent and reflect the general sense in the human sciences that social psychology (and perhaps the human sciences more generally) required a more technical, scientific approach.

Out of all the textbooks published prior to Allport's 1924 work, Robert Gault's *Social Psychology: The Bases of Behavior Called Social* was perhaps most in line with the direction of 1920s American psychology. Gault had done his graduate work at Cornell, Clark, and the University of Pennsylvania and was well-connected in the discipline. His definition of social psychology as the study of "interactions among animals" and "reaction of members of the human race to one another" was similar to the one that would be espoused by Allport a year later. He promoted the study of behavioral adjustment of the individual to the environment and to other individuals, dismissed the notion of specific instincts, and directly denounced the philosophical notion of the social mind. Nonetheless, it received scant attention in the literature. It was reviewed in a rather summary fashion in the *Journal of Abnormal Psychology and Social Psychology,* where the reviewer did critique the lack of attention to physiology and comparative psychology (Rosenow, 1924). The other review, written by Floyd Allport himself, was nothing short of glowing; Allport (1924b) described the book as marking "the beginning of a new era in social psychology" (p. 647).

It is difficult to comprehend why Gault's work did not receive much attention in the psychological literature. It is possible that this was due in part to Gault's heavy focus on social consciousness, which echoed Baldwin's notion of the ejective self. This may have been unappealing for 1920s psychologists, who were turning to behaviorism and stimulus-response psychology. It is also possible that it was simply overshadowed by Allport's work, which appeared shortly after Gault's and amended minor shortcomings; Allport's text included ample reference to both comparative and physiological psychology, paid far less attention to consciousness, and was written in a more forceful style that represented a clear break from the past and a solid attempt at a new beginning for the field.

A Scientific Social Psychology

On December 28, 1922, the attendees of the annual meeting of the American Psychological Association gathered together for the convention banquet in the large, oak-paneled living room of the Harvard Union (Boring, 1923; Harvard Union, 1913). At the close of the banquet, Knight Dunlap rose to give his presidential address, titled "The foundations of social psychology." In this address, Dunlap (1923) applied his unique brand of humor and biting sarcasm to the fledgling field. He described social psychology as an "orphan subject…in danger of being declared an illusion" (p. 81) and admitted that he often began class lectures on it by stating that he did not have a clue what it was. He explained that although there had been plenty written on the topic, the literature was "no more psychology than Christian science is science" (p. 82). He described this literature as

> in part speculation, with neither foundation nor means of checking, in part a collection of platitudes stated in imposing words, and in part the mere grouping of phenomena under new names, none of which excite my interest to any great degree, because this doesn't seem to get us anywhere (p. 82)

Finally, he indicated that while he enjoyed history, anthropology, and politics in his "leisure moments," he did not believe these subjects yielded suitable methods for social psychology: "I have no interest in social psychology, except in so far as it may promise to become a science" (p. 98).

Dunlap was indeed expressing a sentiment that reverberated throughout psychology and many other human sciences, where scholars were calling for subject matter and approaches to social life that adopted an objectivist, experimental framework (Kantor, 1923; Schneider, 1920). There was a growing agreement—at least among psychologists—that social psychology was not

the study of social consciousness, social instincts, or the group mind, but that instead, it studied the behavior of individuals towards and in response to other individuals, and the roots of such behavior in the nervous system (Hunter, 1919; Smith & Guthrie, 1923; Warren, 1922).

This approach to social psychology mirrored changes that had occurred in general psychology in the early 1900s. As Kantor (1922) noted in his review of psychological textbook writing, several trends had gained prominence in the field's writings, including increased attention to objectivity, less borrowing from other disciplines and an increased focus on psychological data, more focus on the nervous system, and a dismissal of any concept that was not amenable to exploration via scientific methods. The adoption of this objectivist approach seemed particularly important for social psychology, where the inherently political and ethical nature of the subject matter rendered it fertile ground for bias. As Paul Young noted in 1923, "prejudices frequently block the road to experiment in social psychology; but there is hope that experimental methods will be developed" (p. 644). It was clear by 1923 that a social psychology rooted in the methods and approaches of individual psychology was wanted. Furthermore, the proliferation of social psychology courses in colleges and universities in the 1920s ensured that a textbook presenting such a social psychology would have a potentially vast audience.[34] Allport's *Social Psychology*, completed in 1923 and published in 1924, was in this respect, perfectly timed.

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[34] A cursory search of catalogues, yearbooks, and bulletins from American universities and colleges during the early 1920s indicates that social psychology was being offered at the undergraduate level in the majority of institutions and in some cases also at the graduate level. Interestingly, by 1922, it was also being offered in at least 7 high schools (United States Bureau of Education, 1922). At the post-secondary level, it was being offered under a variety of disciplines, including sociology, psychology, philosophy, ethics, anthropology, and political science. It was also defined very differently both within and between disciplines. Subject matter covered included suggestion and imitation, social attitudes, the social survey, social progress, social customs and conventions, social consciousness, native traits and the social self, and social environment and the individual mind. Few of these catalogues note the textbook used; those that do point to the texts of McDougall, Ross, Bogardus, and in one case, Graham Wallas's *The Great Society.*

Allport's *Social Psychology* presented the field as a rather simple extension of individual psychology, rooted in behaviorism, comparative psychology, adaptation and adjustment, and evolution. As Allport (1924a) explained in the preface of the book, social behavior was simply a subcategory of general behavior:

> Behavior in general may be regarded as the interplay of stimulation and reaction between the individual and his environment. Social behavior comprises the stimulations and reactions arising between an individual and the social portion of his environment; that is, between the individual and his fellows (p. 3)

Though social behavior was perhaps more complex, it was not substantively different from the kinds of behaviors studied daily within the psychological laboratories that had spread across the United States in the early twentieth century. Reactions to people were no different, he argued, than reactions to objects; both involved a state of need or maladjustment in the organism, followed by a behavior aimed at adjustment or adaptation of the individual to the environment. With this framework established, Allport stated his definition of social psychology as

> *the science which studies the behavior of the individual in so for as his behavior stimulates other individuals, or is itself a reaction to their behavior; and which describes the consciousness of the individual in so far as it is a consciousness of social objects and social reactions.* More briefly stated, social psychology is the study of the social behavior and the social consciousness of the individual (p. 12)

Allport was careful to note that consciousness in this case was a state of mind that accompanied a behavior. It was never a causal link in the stimulus-response chain and minds, he pointed out, never stimulate one another or act on one another. Furthermore, he argued that this science of the social behavior and consciousness of the individual was foundational to but completely separate

from sociology, which studied the "formulation, solidarity, continuity, and change" of social groups (p. 10).

Following this very direct and rather succinct definition of the field, Allport presented the reader with material that would be found in any introductory psychology text of the time: an introduction to the adaptive function of behavior and an overview of the physiological aspects of behavior, including basic concepts such as effectors and receptors, neurons, the reflex arc, and the general structures and functions of the brain and the nervous system. Though this was common practice for introductory psychology texts of the time (Kantor, 1922), such explanations of neurophysiology did not appear in social psychology textbooks. He then moved on to discuss the hereditary bases of behavior, dealing with the controversial issue of instincts in a rather deft manner. Noting that the theory of specific instincts was no longer a tenable one, Allport argued that it was equally untenable to do away with the role of heredity completely. Therefore, in the place of instincts, Allport posited *prepotent reflexes*, which are groups of muscular, skeletal, and somatic responses to a given stimuli. These reflexes are strong, most are functional at birth, and they have a potent influence on conduct throughout the lifespan. Behavior, including social behavior, is built on these prepotent reflexes as classical conditioning and trial-and-error learning result in the formation of new habits and new behavior patterns.

Overall, there was very little in Allport's *Social Psychology* in terms of content that was entirely novel. With the exception of his unique discussion of attitudes, social facilitation, gender differences, sex, and a few other concepts, Allport's presentation consisted primarily of familiar material that drew on many of the classic studies and findings from the field at the time, including reference to Clever Hans, the talking horse; Thorndike's experiments with the puzzle box; and Watson's work with Little Albert. What made the book unique, however, was its

presentation of social psychology as a distinct discipline, separate from anthropology, sociology, economics, and political science and founded on the principles of individual psychology. In the opening chapter of the book, titled "Social psychology as a science of individual behavior and consciousness," Allport stated in a rather matter-of-fact manner that social psychology was the study of individual behavior and consciousness. He presented this not as an argument, but rather as "the present standpoint" of the field. He then went on to dismiss various forms of what he called the "group fallacy." For Allport, writers fell prey to this fallacy each time they "postulate a kind of 'collective mind' or group consciousness' as separate from the minds of the individuals of whom the group is composed" (p. 4). He noted that the fallacy had taken many forms, including notions of the "crowd mind," the "collective or class mind," the "group mind," and biological forms of the fallacy as exemplified by organicism.[35] All causes of behavior, he argued, lie within the individual and explaining behavior requires looking to individual behavior mechanisms.

It is also in this opening chapter that Allport explains the proper relationship between sociology and psychology. Again, the material is presented not as an argument, but rather as a statement of facts:

> The study of groups is…the province of the special science of *sociology*. While the social psychologist studies the individual in the group, the sociologist deals with the group as a whole. He discusses its formation, solidarity, continuity, and change. Psychological data…are explanatory principles upon which sociology builds in interpreting the life of groups (pp. 10-11)

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[35] In critiquing organicism, Allport points directly to his original dissertation supervisor, Hugo Münsterberg, as providing "an elaborate and ingenious social organism metaphor" (p. 10) in *Psychology, General and Applied.*

For Allport, social psychology did not require the study of groups at all; instead it would focus on the social behavior and consciousness of the individual. Sociologists could then make use of the data uncovered by social psychologists to describe group processes. One of the outcomes of this disciplinary arrangement was that sociological approaches were denied explanatory power. According to Allport, unless group processes were reduced to individual behavior mechanisms, as psychological social psychologists would do, the examination of groups remained a descriptive rather than an explanatory enterprise.

Following these introductory chapters, Allport turned to the study of social behaviors, drawing largely on research on animal behavior, beginning with descriptions of social behavior among insects and then working up to apes. Later chapters discuss various forms of "social stimulation"—such as language and facial and bodily expression—and various forms of response to these stimulations, including sympathy, the formation of attitudes, and laughter. More complex responses include those found in face-to-face and coacting groups (as in Allport's work on social facilitation) as well as in competitive situations. Throughout the work, Allport repeatedly emphasized the importance of explaining social phenomena in terms of individual behavior and adjustment. For example, in his discussion of crowd phenomena, Allport was careful to emphasize that a crowd is simply a group of individuals focusing on the same stimulus in a situation where prepotent, elementary drives are thwarted. A crowd therefore, is made up not of a collective mind teeming with crowd impulses (as Gustav LeBon had suggested); instead, an individual already engaged in a struggle response finds his or her emotions further elevated by the presence of others, whose drives have also been thwarted in the same manner. In another chapter, Allport describes *social attitudes*, treating them as "preparations for response" or "neural settings" (p. 320). Mental conflict is similarly described as a struggle "between two

antagonistic drives" or "socialized habits" (p. 337). Throughout the work, many familiar concepts are reframed in this fashion in terms of behavior and adjustment.[36]

When Allport's text was released in 1924, it was widely and, for the most part, positively reviewed. Many reviewers applauded Allport's dismissal of instincts, his use of the principles of learning, and his inclusion of a broad spectrum of contemporary research and resources (Bernard, 1924a, 1926; Wells, 1924; Wolfe, 1924; Woodworth, 1925).[37] The most common sentiment expressed in the reviews, however, was that Allport's text represented a novel and refreshing approach to a troubled field. It was described as "refreshingly objective" (Wolfe, 1924, p. 583) and as a "significant advance" (Woodworth, 1925, p. 92). Many seemed to view Allport's book as belonging much more to the genre of textbooks than did the work of his predecessors. Bernard (1924a) noted that while previous works often appeared to be the work of a "social essayist," Allport's work was clearly that of a serious scholar. Simarily, Wolfe (1924) described the book as "a near approach to the ideal textbook" (p. 585). Woodworth appreciated Allport's matter-of-fact tone, describing the work as have a "textbook quality" and noting that it was "thoroughly serious, not intended simply to stir up thought in the student" (Woodworth, 1925, p. 92). In the same vein, reviewers also applauded Allport's general approach and writing style, which they categorized as marked by precision (Bernard, 1924a) and rooted in facts rather than "arguments and abstractions" (Zirbesi, 1924, p. 255). In general, Allport's audience was impressed with his ability to present social psychology in such a precise, objective, and incontrovertible manner. In short, the book was perfectly suited to serve as an introductory text.

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[36] Throughout the text, Allport draws on findings and concepts from psychoanalysis to discuss basic drives such as hunger and sex, to examine the family as a face-to-face group, and to describe the origins of gender differences. He accepted what he saw as the basic facts and findings of psychoanalysis, including repression of sexual tendencies and concealed attachment to the opposite sex parent. He did not, however, accept many of the basic postulates of psychoanalysis, including infantile sexuality.

[37] There were, however, some reviewers that perhaps rightfully questioned whether Allport's "prepotent reflexes" were all that different from McDougall's instincts. Chicago sociologist Ellsworth Faris (1925) described prepotent reflexes as simply a clumsier way of describing instincts. Economist/sociologist Floyd House agreed (House, 1925).

From the start, however, there was some uncertainty regarding the adequacy of Allport's approach for understanding social life. Though responses to the book were generally positive, almost every reviewer of the work closed his or her review with a brief and often vague statement of doubt regarding a mechanistic, individualistic social psychology. Woodworth (1924) noted that Allport's individualistic approach seemed perhaps inadequate for understanding face-to-face interaction or coordination, such as that found in teamwork. Kimball Young (1924) suggested that Allport's approach would perhaps be incapable of incorporating the social environment, a variable of considerable importance for understanding social behavior. Even Luther Lee Bernard, one of the book's most ardent promoters, noted at the close of his review that Allport "does not offer an adequate account of how individuals behave collectively" (Bernard, 1926, pp. 288-289).[38] Indeed, among all of these positive reviews, there is a general sense that Allport's social psychology had somehow omitted some central aspect of social life.

However, these concerns did not seem to overshadow the general acceptance of the work, at least among psychologists. Employing the then dominant principles of behaviorism and stimulus-response psychology was highly advantageous for Allport, helping him to secure quick and copious support for his textbook from prominent scholars in the field. For psychologists, the work offered a firm and familiar foundation for studying subjects that had previously seemed metaphysical, philosophical, and—perhaps most importantly—value-laden. Subjects like nationalism, submission to authority, religious beliefs, and war could now be examined not as outcomes of a long and complicated social and political history, as was suggested in previous

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[38] Bernard noted in this review that it was generally known that Allport intended to release a second volume that would address collective behavior. This was indeed the case. In 1931, Allport indicated he was working on a second edition of the textbook, which would be enlarged to two volumes. The first volume would be titled *Social Behavior of Individuals* and the second volume would be titled *Societal Behavior of Individuals* (Allport, 1931b). Neither work appeared. Instead, Allport decided to incorporate all of that writing into his manuscript on *The Structure of Nature,* which he failed to complete before his death in 1978.

approaches to social life such as Durkheimian sociology and Wundtian *Völkerpsychologie*. They did not require an anthropological explanation of human groupings or even a sociometric examination of individual relationships. Instead, they could be conceived of as behaviors that were built out of individual responses and adjustments to social stimuli. In short, Allport's social psychology, rooted in the stimulus-response oriented behaviorism of the day, demonstrated the possibility of experimenting on the social world in a controlled laboratory setting. As Harry Hollingworth noted in a letter to Allport, "We have long been waiting for someone to apply the verifiable principles of individual psychology to the various social phenomena, and at last you have done it" (Hollingworth, 1924).

<div style="text-align:center">The Group Fallacy and the Response from Social Science</div>

Social Psychology was just one of a number of publications issued by Allport in the 1920s that critiqued sociological conceptions of the group and denied explanatory power and scientific status to sociology and related social sciences. In the years leading up to and following the publication of the textbook, Allport used conference presentations, book reviews, and journal articles to promote his individualistic approach and argue vehemently against sociological conceptions of social psychology. He also made advantageous use of his tenure as co-editor of the *Journal of Abnormal Psychology and Social Psychology* to redefine social psychology as the study of individual behavior. In the very first issue in which the name of the *Journal* was changed to include social psychology, the editors—Allport and Morton Prince—made it clear that a particular brand of social psychology would be represented in the *Journal*'s pages. It was noted that the field of social psychology had broken with its past and "through the enterprise of the pioneers" had "grown into a science having as its field a unique set of natural phenomena" and a "distinct method" (Prince & Allport, 1921, p. 1). This new social psychology took as its

point of departure the individual and "the adjustment of the individual to the social environment" (p. 2). It was clear from this introductory editorial that while the *Journal* had been expanded to include social psychology, it would include only a particular brand of social psychology.

The editors indeed followed through with this plan. Articles published in the earliest years of the joint *Journal* focused on individual adjustment and behavior, and the content of these articles was frequently aligned with Allport's approach to social psychology. These included an article by Robert Gault (1921) repudiating the social mind, an article by Floyd and Gordon Allport (1921) interpreting personality as a social stimulus that produces adjustment and response, an article on sympathy as a conditioned reflex (Humphrey, 1922), and a host of articles debating the concept of instinct in social psychology (Hocking, 1921; McDougall, 1921). This content stands in rather stark contrast to the articles published during the same period in the *American Journal of Sociology*, which included an article on the social organism (Park, 1923), an article on the importance of understanding culture (Herskovitz & Willey, 1923), an observational study of neighborhoods in Columbus, Ohio (McKenzie, 1922), and a study of instinctive and cultural factors in group conflict (Case, 1922). By the 1920s, a division of labor had clearly begun in terms of explaining and describing social life.

Allport further disseminated his own views on social psychology in a number of book reviews written and published throughout the 1920s. In a review of Albert Balz's *The Basis of Social Theory*, for example, Allport critiqued the author's idea that the group is causally prior to the individual and that all psychology is therefore social psychology. Allport argued that causal explanation must lie in the laws of individual learning and physiology: "Whatever causal significance exists here arises not from a social situation…but from the social behavior of individuals" (Allport, 1924c). He made a similar argument in a detailed, five-page review

critiquing sociologist W. F. Ogburn's *Social Change*, noting that "human action is the force; culture the result" (Allport, 1924d). In his review of another book on social groups, Allport accused the author, B. Warren Brown, of ascribing individual attributes and processes such as purpose and conflict to groups and therefore committing the group fallacy (Allport, 1930). Even psychologists who examined the nature of groups and institutions were not immune; though they were applauded for adopting a psychological standpoint, any notion of the group as an entity in and of itself was immediately pinpointed and critiqued (Allport, 1924e, 1926).

In addition to these book reviews, Allport published a number of articles outlining the group fallacy. These articles pinpointing and condemning the group fallacy appeared in a number of leading journals, including the *American Journal of Sociology,* the *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology,* and *Psychological Bulletin.* These views were also summarized in a 1923 presentation given to the American Sociological Society. There, Allport accused sociologists and anthropologists of unconsciously falling prey to the group fallacy. When ascribing actions, attributes, and causes to group-level phenomena, he argued, scientists may perhaps be intending nothing more than a metaphor. However, such metaphors may lead to error:

> So long as the language is intended and accepted as purely descriptive and metaphorical
> no confusion exists. But the transition from description to *explanation* is in such cases
> very subtle, and not always recognized. The intangibility of the phenomena combines
> with the collective or abstract use of language to produce an error. This error is the
> attempt to explain social phenomena in terms of the group as a whole, whereas the true
> explanation is to be found only in its component parts, the individuals (Allport, 1924f, p.
> 60).

Allport then went on to point out this error in the work of a number of social and behavioral scientists, including sociologist Charles Ellwood and other scholars such as Alfred Kroeber and W. H. R. Rivers.[39] Again, he reiterated that all sciences must look to sciences below them for explanatory power. As such, sociology must look to psychology:

> the sociologist describes social or collective phenomena and explains them in terms of individual behavior; the psychologist describes behavior and explains it in terms of reflex mechanisms; the physiologist describes the reflex mechanism and explains it in terms of physical and chemical changes (p. 71).

Allport closed the talk by stating the task of sociology:

> The work of sociology, therefore, would be to describe aggregates and social change in terms of the group, but to explain these phenomena in terms of the social psychology of the individual (p. 73).

This distinction between description and explanation permeated Allport's discussions of the group fallacy throughout the 1920s.

Perhaps understandably, the reactions of social scientists to Allport's writings were not generally very positive. In a response to the 1923 paper, anthropologist Alexander Goldenweiser (a student of Franz Boas) argued that social scientists did not posit a group mind or a social psyche, nor had they done so since the days of Lazarus and Steinthal (Goldenweiser, 1924). He also took issue with Allport's notions of causation, description, and explanation. Causation, he argued, may lie within the individual or within the realm of social and cultural factors in much the same way that individual or historical forces may be seen as the cause of change. As for Allport's notion of description and explanation, Goldenweiser argued that explanation can

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[39] I have been unable to ascertain whether Kroeber and Rivers were present at this meeting. They were not members of the ASS. Ellwood was present; he became the president of the ASS the following year.

include *how* something occurs as well as *what* occurs. In neither case is reductionism necessary for explanation. Bain (1930) agreed, noting that to reduce a fact to a lower level is a case of "throwing out the baby with the bathwater," since the fact disappears in the attempt to explain it. Sociologist Ellsworth Faris, in his review of Allport's textbook, focused his critique on the behaviorist approach to social life, noting that although the individualistic approach to studying social life had been present in psychology since the early twentieth century, Allport's work had taken this position to the extreme: "it is one thing to investigate the persons in a society and quite another to assume that the institutions of society are all to be explained as a result of the reflexes of babies" (Faris, 1925, p. 720).

In what is perhaps the most thoughtful article critiquing Allport's approach, sociologist Malcolm Willey (1929) argued that group level concepts such as cultures or institutions may serve as a stimulus to individual behavior. These "integrated behavior patterns" (p. 213) produce responses: "these are stimuli to behavior, and stimuli that would not derive from any single individual" (p. 214). Willey also analyzed Allport's assertion that sociology must remain a descriptive enterprise, suggesting that there was no hard and fast line between scientific description and scientific explanation:

> Ultimate, first-cause explanation is not within the province of science; explanation can mean nothing more than description that is sufficiently accurate, including the description of the attributes of a phenomenon or phenomena, to permit of prediction…Instead of two discrete categories, there are here involved only different degrees of the same category (p. 215).

Willey then went on to draw examples from the natural sciences where a given phenomenon such as the rising of the sun or the growth of an organ is explained both in terms of that

phenomenon as well as through reduction to lower level phenomena. Both explanations, he

argued, are valid.

These published reactions to Allport's work were very direct and critical, but they were

far more polite than those represented in the unpublished record. Five years after Allport

presented his paper on the group fallacy at the ASS meeting, Charles Ellwood's ire was still

evident. In a letter to Luther Lee Bernard, he wrote of Allport's work:

> It makes my blood boil. Why do not some of you younger chaps reply to him? Of course,
>
> I have not the fighting strength and energy which I once had. Allport has simply
>
> pulverized the very foundations of sociology as we understand it. I made up my mind that
>
> he was out to do this when I listened to his paper on 'The Group Fallacy'. Deny it as
>
> much he wishes, he attempts nothing less than to destroy the concept of the group as a
>
> natural object (Ellwood, 1928 as cited in LoConto, 2011, p. 120).

Others agreed with Ellwood's sentiments. William McDougall's characterized Allport's text as

"utterly incompetent" and noted that it "betrays such complete blindness and bland self-satisfied

indifference to gross inconsistencies in his own treatment." He went on to note that Allport's

work was nothing more than evidence that "grossly incompetent work can be 'put over' on

American Colleges on a considerable scale" (McDougall, 1934).[40] W. I Thomas's assessment of

Allport's attack on the group fallacy was similarly harsh: "I don't think Allport has anything. I

think he is cracked. He made quite a flop at the Sociological meeting in 1927"[41] (Thomas, 1929).

Stuart Chapin was somewhat less harsh regarding Allport's views on the group concept, but he

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[40] The letters in this section come from the appendix of a 1935 Master's thesis on Allport's theory of the group fallacy (Cornell, 1935). To view the individually cited letters, see Cornell's thesis. Sociology graduate student B. Dean Cornell and his advisor Thomas Eliot made a list of the people that Allport had accused of committing the group fallacy, contacted them, and asked them to respond to a series of questions related to Allport's views as well as their own. The appendix also contains letters between Cornell and Allport. All of the letters are reproduced in their entirety in the appendix.

[41] At the 1927 meeting of the American Sociological Society, Allport again presented a paper on the group fallacy (Allport, 1928b).

noted that "a consistent application of his principles would deny the reality or independent existence of biological organisms, personalities or astronomical systems as well as of groups" (Chapin, 1929).

Many others seemed rather indifferent or perhaps slightly annoyed by Allport's polemics, seeing them as a mistaken and hasty interpretation of sociological work rather than as a serious threat to the scientific status of the field. Edward Ross took little offense to Allport's criticism of him, noting that he had never "conceived of the group as other than an outgrowth of the interaction of minds of individuals" (Ross, 1929). Robert S. Lynd indicated that he believed Allport was simply overemphasizing the importance of the individual because sociologists had overemphasized the group; he suggested that everyone move on from the debate and "focus on data-gathering" (Lynd,1929). Bernard indicated that he was sympathetic to Allport's point of view, though he did note that "he goes much too far" in casting all collective concepts aside (Bernard, 1929). R. M. MacIver agreed with Allport's denouncement of the group mind insofar as it was being used in a matter analogous to individual minds, but he saw Allport's denial of the objective character of any kind of group structure as a "logical error." (MacIver, 1929). Even Alfred Kroeber, whose work had been on the receiving end of much of Allport's polemics was rather nonchalant, analyzing Allport's views objectively. He noted that that Allport had taken a psychological approach, while he had taken a sociological one and concluded: "Between us, in our several ways, we are both fighting the battle of better understanding" (Kroeber, 1934).

According to Allport he did have some supporters. In a 1928 letter to sociologist Thomas Eliot, he indicated that he had received 16 letters from sociologists who supported his view (Allport, 1928). When he looked back on this period nearly five decades later, however, he

recalled that his work on the group fallacy had not earned him many friends among the sociologists:

> The climax came when I was publicly denounced in an address made by the president of the American Sociological Society at their annual meeting. I was not present, but the affair was related to me by a friend who reported the speaker's statement as follows. He said that in the Middle Ages people got to quoting Aristotle so vigorously, and sometimes to so little purpose, that someone had to rise up and say "There's no truth in Aristotle." "So now," he continued, "I say there is no truth in Floyd Allport." At this point, as he made a sweeping gesture, his hand struck a glass chandelier, sending the pieces flying about the room (Allport, 1974, p. 16)[42]

Given his previous presentations in front of this Society and his repeated critiques of its membership, it is not difficult to believe this somewhat dramatic account was at least somewhat grounded in truth.

By the 1930s, there was still much confusion in the field regarding the definition and methods of social psychology. Nonetheless, there was a growing understanding that sociological and psychological approaches to social psychology were perhaps not compatible. As one scholar noted in 1936, it seemed that sociologists, who focused on the products of social relationships and socialization, worked deductively. Psychologists on the other hand worked with the individual and interindividual interactions and proceeded inductively: "The two schools proceed from different concepts" (Lemmon, 1936, p. 666).[43] Another author similarly noted in 1940 that two schools of social psychology had developed

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[42] It is not known which meeting this may have been, but in personal communications, other historians of social psychology have suggested it may have been during Ellwood's presidency in 1924.
[43] This particular author adopted Allport's approach that sociology could describe *what* happened in the social world, but only a social psychologist could explain *how* it happened.

One is an attempt to explain social behaviour largely by means of the concepts of

individual psychology adjusted somewhat to meet group behaviour situations. The work

of Floyd Allport typifies this approach and his efforts have added little to the body of

knowledge dealing with social behaviour of man (Dawson, 1940, p. 162).

The author described the second approach as a sociological one, focused on the effects of social

institutions on the individual and exemplified in the work of W. I. Thomas. A third author

writing on the status of the field in 1940 further supported this view, noting that the field had

been "divided into two distinct and mutually exclusive schools of thought" (Reuter, 1940, p.

299), one psychological and one sociological. Allport was again identified as the leader of the

psychological approach. This literature from the two decades following Allport's persuasive

arguments for a psychological social psychology contains innumerable references to these two

schools or approaches and offers unmistakable evidence that a rift—due in no small part to

Allport's efforts—had developed in social psychology.

<div align="center">Conclusion</div>

As the debate between Allport and his critics continued throughout the 1920s, Allport's

work received much attention from all quarters. In an analysis of citations of textbooks published

between 1908 and 1929, Collier, Minton, & Reynolds (1991) note that Allport was the third most

frequently cited author among both psychological and sociological textbook authors. From 1930

to 1942, he rose to the top of the list as the most cited author among both groups of scholars.[44]

His textbook had indeed demonstrated the possibility of a social psychology built entirely on the

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[44] In the 1908 to 1929 lists, he was tied with Charles Darwin for third place. It should be noted that this analysis did not pay any attention to the way in which the authors were cited. Glances at the literature suggest that Allport's work was frequently cited among both groups, but perhaps in different ways. Among psychologists, his work was cited as a reference on particular topics such as laughter, sympathy, attitudes, social facilitation or instincts. Among sociologists, he was frequently cited in discussions of sociological theories and methods, often standing as the figure head for an individualistic approach to group-level concepts.

foundation of individual psychology and its success was undoubtedly due in part to the fact that it fit very well within the trends of mainstream psychology. Psychologists now had at their disposal a textbook for initiating a new generation of scholars into the field of social psychology. As historians have noted, the book therefore "represents a turning point in American social psychology" (Collier, Minton, & Reynolds, 1991, p. 99).

Perhaps even more importantly, however, Allport's work in the 1920s had a significant impact on the relationship between sociologically and psychologically oriented scholars of social life. His repeated attacks on sociologists, anthropologists, and other authors who promoted the study of group-level concepts created animosity between social and behavioral scientists. It also shone a light on seemingly insurmountable differences between these two groups of scholars, particularly in regards to their prevailing philosophies of science. While some psychologists were perhaps slightly uneasy with Allport's reductionist, objectivist approach, they seemed to generally accept it as a starting point for an experimental social psychology. Such an approach was, after all, familiar to them, as it had come to permeate the field of psychology; the inability to adequately formulate social reality may have seemed a small price to pay for natural-scientific status (Diserens, 1925). Sociologists and anthropologists, however, had a much stronger reaction, viewing Allport's work sometimes as a direct attack on the foundations of their field and sometimes as a rather harmless but very base misinterpretation of their work. In both cases, Allport's work did little to engender cooperation or collaboration between the two groups of workers. Furthermore, Allport's presentation of individualism and collectivism as mutually exclusive approaches may have discouraged attempts at bridging these two positions by seeking out shades of grey between sociologically- and psychologically-oriented work. In these ways, Allport contributed significantly to what scholars would later describe as the development of

"two social psychologies" that operated independently, with each being unaware of findings and advances in the other (Stryker, 1977).

The exchange between Allport and group-oriented scholars in the 1920s had another significant outcome, not necessarily in terms of the development of the field of social psychology, but rather in terms of the Allport's own intellectual development and his approach to individual and group phenomena. Resisting his repeated attempts to analyze group-level concepts into their constituent parts, scholars pointed to a glaring error in this approach. Allport's critics argued that—taken to its logical conclusion—such an approach would deny existence to all entities, since entities at all levels of existence may be reduced to more basic levels of existence. By the 1930s, he had become aware of the inadequacy of the position he had taken in his 1924 textbook, a position which he said "sociologists had rightly criticized as slighting the actual social reality" (Allport, 1974, p. 16). However, he also still firmly believed that sociological conceptions were equally inadequate. Much of the remainder of his career would therefore be devoted to attempts at accomplishing a perhaps impossible task: creating an individualistic social psychology that successfully accounted for social reality.

Chapter 4

Social Psychology, Social Institutions, and Social Control (1925-1940)

In 1924, after completing his textbook at the University of North Carolina Chapel Hill, Floyd Allport received an offer from Syracuse University. He was invited to become Professor of Social and Political Psychology at a new, interdisciplinary department: the Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs. The Maxwell School was established in October of 1924 with the goal of teaching good citizenship and training students for positions in public affairs (Maxwell School, 2012). Liberal arts undergraduates participated in the program's citizenship curriculum and the program was also home to graduate students in the new field of public administration. The Maxwell School was a unique one from the start. Its interdisciplinary focus is best evidenced by a series of topic-centered seminars established in 1926. Faculty members were recruited from a wide variety of disciplines, including social psychology, history, international relations, economics, and social biology. A topic was then chosen; these topics included prohibition, propaganda, newspapers and public opinion, America's relation to China, war guilt, and debt. Faculty would give formal presentations on the topic followed by open discussion among faculty and students (Willey, 1928). Daniel Katz, Allport's first graduate student at Syracuse, described the Maxwell School as highly interdisciplinary, having as its primary goal "the achievement of theoretical integration of the behavioral sciences" (Katz, Johnson, & Nichols, 1998, p. 124). Allport accepted the position, relocating to Syracuse in 1924 and remaining there until his retirement in 1956.

Allport settled into life at Syracuse, teaching a variety of courses including psychology, social psychology, psychology of nationalism, and scientific methods. In addition to his teaching, he maintained an active research program, involving many graduate students. His students could

often be found in various corners of the state of New York observing and recording a wide variety of social behaviors. Daniel Katz, Dale Hartman, and Arthur Jenness gathered attitude and opinion data at Syracuse University (Allport & Hartman, 1925; Jenness, 1932; Katz, 1929), while Richard Schanck gathered data on attitudes toward card-playing among religious groups in rural New York (Allport, Dickens, & Schanck, 1932). Miriam Gartner examined pedestrian behavior at crosswalks in urban New York and Hawley Simpson recorded the amount of time motorists parked their cars in time-limited lots (Allport, 1934a). Milton Dickens sifted through and recorded the arrival times of factory workers at the Onondoga Pottery Company factory, while yet other graduate students gathered data on social behavior at the Civil Works Administration and neighborhood Catholic churches (Allport, 1934a). By 1956, Allport had supervised 22 doctoral students and 18 Masters students, all of whom contributed to a substantial program of research focused on the nature and regularities of social behavior.[45]

During these years, Allport also took on several administrative duties, serving as the American Psychological Association's representative to the Social Science Research Council from 1925 to 1931. He was also active in academic societies, serving on APA's Council of Directors from 1928 to 1930 as well as on the Council of Directors of the newly formed Society for the Psychological Study of Social Issues in 1938. He attended APA regularly, serving as

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[45] With few exceptions, Allport's students did not go on to become central figures in social psychology. Daniel Katz (1903-1998) was one such exception, conducting pioneering research on attitudes, morale, and stereotyping. In 1938, he and another of Allport's students, Richard Schanck, published a textbook on social psychology that was quite successful (Kahn, 2000). Schanck went on to become a professor of social psychology at the University of Akron, where he chaired the Akron Civil Liberties Committee. While at Akron, he and his students became involved in the labor movement and, after his students stole a ballot box in a union election, he was charged with "unarmed robbery" and jailed. He served 8 months and was released on parole in 1946 (American Civil Liberties Union, 1944; Two Akron Men, 1945). Correspondence between Katz and Schanck shows that while Katz supported Allport's approach, Schanck did not. He was not fully convinced by Allport's mechanism, but was also unconvinced by more idealistic approaches, which he associated with the approach of Gordon Allport (Schanck, 1941). Another of Allport's students, Chiang-Lin Woo, who had come to Syracuse from China after reading a Chinese translation of Allport's 1924 text, returned to China in 1948 to collect data on Chinese customs to compare with the data he and Allport had collected in the United States. As of 1961, Allport was unable to locate him, noting in a letter to another of his students, "Woo is incommunicado, in Communist China, since 1948—and, we fear, may be dead" (Allport, 1961).

program chair and chairing sessions. He also remained tied into research efforts in the

governmental realm, taking part in President Herbert Hoover's conference on home building and

home ownership in 1931 and the Department of Agriculture's conference on surveys of farmers'

opinions in 1938 (Allport, 1939b).

Three years after his move to Syracuse, Allport's wartime marriage to Ethel Hudson

ended and eleven years later, he married Helen Willey Hartley, a professor of English and

Education at Syracuse (Allport, 1941). Prior to remarrying, Allport lived alone, his children all

having been placed in boarding schools. During these years, he began developing his interest in

drawing and watercolor painting, becoming a member of the Associated Artists of Syracuse (and

eventually, its president) and exhibiting his watercolors in local and regional museums (Allport,

n.d.). He also took time to travel, visiting England, Germany, and France in 1932 for "recreation

and education" (Allport, n.d.) and spent a summer in Colorado as visiting faculty in 1937 at the

Colorado State College of Education (Shaw, 1937).[46]

During Allport's early years as a Professor in the Maxwell School, his work began to

expand and change considerably, taking on an increasingly political and popular tone throughout

the 1930s. He began to give radio talks and started publishing in *Harper's Magazine* as well as

the local Syracuse newspaper, *The Post Standard,* writing and speaking about a variety of

popular topics, including the role of women, religion, nationalism, and individual self-

expression. The content of these publications and presentations was diverse, but the writings

shared a common theme or orientation. Throughout these works, Allport reacted to the

increasingly complex and regulated nature of American life, exploring the ways in which the

"whole individual" becomes fractionated in industrial society and behavior becomes segmented,

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[46] Historian Sam Parkovnick has suggested that during this time, Allport suffered a nervous breakdown. I have
found no evidence of this aside from a brief mention of "adjustment difficulties" in his first marriage.

overly regulated, and far removed from "natural" types of behavior that fulfill biological needs and drives. He also began to examine new ways of studying social institutions, regulated behavior, and conformity situations, which he saw as playing a central role in individual behavior. Taken together, Allport's writings throughout the 1930s—including his continued attacks on group-level concepts—appear as a strong and pointed statement against increased and poorly-planned mechanisms of social control. It is in this period of Allport's career that the moral aspects of his individualism become increasingly clear.

<div align="center">Social Science and Social Institutions in 1930s America</div>

Allport's concerns about institutions, social control, and increasing regulation followed on the heels of major shifts in the shape and functioning of American society. In the latter half of the nineteenth century, America became a nation of big business accompanied by massive industrial growth and corporate consolidation (Wiebe, 1967). Technological innovations had helped to radically alter the nature of business and industry; improvements in the railway system, for example, had provided faster shipping at lower costs and opened opportunities for economies of scale (Schmitz, 1993). Corporations began to dominate the economic landscape. In the late nineteenth century, Rockefeller created Standard Oil, a consolidation of 27 different companies into a single corporation. The turn of the century also saw the struggle between large corporations such as those headed up by Andrew Carnegie and J. P. Morgan. Furthermore, in 1901, the first billion dollar company, the United States Steel Company, was formed, exemplifying the wealth, power, and the new possibilities of the corporation (Baydo, 1982). This proliferation of big business led some to fear that it had replaced God as an object of worship: the Sears Roebuck catalog was known as the Bible; skyscrapers were deemed the temples of

American business; and the Woolworth building in Manhattan, the tallest skyscraper to date, was known as the "Cathedral of Commerce" (Baydo, 1982).

As one author has noted, the rise of corporate America was likely disconcerting for many: "To previous generations, the size and power of America's newly created business-industrial conglomerates would have been unbelievable. Perhaps frightening might be the word that some would have applied to the change" (Baydo, 1982, p. 4). Many saw large corporations as harmful, greedy, and self-interested and bemoaned the loss of face-to-face contact that had seemed to dissipate with the rise of large factories where workers became little more than cogs in a machine (Schmitz, 1993). Furthermore, there was a general concern regarding the power and widespread influence of these monopolies and unease regarding their relationship to familiar, traditional institutions. As Schmitz (1993) explains,

> How were Americans to understand the relationship of these commercial leviathans to the family, the church, the local community, and the nation itself? A giant corporation might exercise control over the activities and opportunities of an individual family through employment or welfare programs. Its assets, influence, and geographic reach might surpass those of one of the states and even challenge those of the nation (p. 9)

The size, complexity, influence, and sheer number of these new conglomerates indeed fostered anxieties and heralded suspicions.

These anxieties were not limited to the general public; they were also increasingly evident among academics, politicians, and other public figures. From 1913 to 1914, future Supreme Court Justice Louis Brandeis wrote a series of articles in *Harper's Magazine* about the "curse of bigness," warning of the dangers of monopolies and large corporations and arguing that such centralization of power and wealth were deleterious to individual liberty and need-

fulfillment (Brandeis, 1934). Such corporations, he believed, were directed toward increased power rather than increased economic efficiency. Their "bigness" was particularly disconcerting, as it decreased the possibility that citizens would understand these conglomerates, which had become so central to so many aspects of American life. Brandeis, a leader in the movement for decentralization of economic power, urged for measures that would cultivate an informed citizenry capable of contributing to a decentralized democracy through rational judgment and decision-making (Sandel, 1996).

In the early twentieth century, John Dewey had also repeatedly examined the potential repercussions of such "bigness," suggesting that an entirely new ethic was required to assess the changing system:

> Our conceptions of honesty and justice, of rights and duties, got their present shaping largely in an industrial and business order when mine and thine could be easily distinguished; when it was easy to tell how much a man produced; when the producer sold to his neighbors, and an employer had also the relations of neighbor to his workmen; when responsibility could be personally located, and conversely a man could control the business he owned or make individual contracts (Dewey & Tufts, 1908, p. 496)

The new economic and social system, he argued, required an outlook that accepted the collectivist nature of American life. The task at hand was one of figuring out how to secure a rich moral life for the individual within this new system. He believed the task was a difficult one, since large corporations failed to tend to individual interests and desires. According to Dewey, structuring society according to principles of economic efficiency may indeed result in higher productivity, but such an arrangement may fail to meet the needs of the majority of individuals in a given society.

The attention that social scientists were paying to changing conditions in American life is perhaps most clearly exemplified in Robert and Helen Lynd's sociological examination of an ordinary, small American city—Muncie, Indiana—which the authors referred to as Middletown (Lynd & Lynd, 1929). Begun in 1923, the Middletown studies were aimed at examining one group unit—the city—in its entirety, including all social institutions, large and small. After following the citizens of Middletown for a year, the Lynds painted a picture of standard American life that was disconcerting. The city, it seemed, had made little progress since the 1890s. Leisure time for citizens was scarce, and those that had it spent it playing cards, watching movies, or dancing. The authors noted that leisure-time reading was rare and that the ideas of the citizens were formed in primary and secondary education and maintained largely through tradition and convention. While industry had advanced in Middletown, the lives of the citizens had stagnated. As one reviewer noted, the citizens of Middletown looked much like Sinclair Lewis's (1922) fictional character George F. Babbit, whose highly ritualized, conformist existence had become an implicit critique of the vacuity of American life (Hunt, 1929). In 1935, when the Lynds returned to Middletown to examine the effects of the Depression, they and their readers were surprised and dejected to find that, despite the complete breakdown of social institutions in 1930s, little had changed in terms of how the city operated and how its citizens spent their time (Lynd & Lynd, 1937).

Works like *Middletown* were representative of a new turn in the study of social life that came to dominate in the early twentieth century. While scholars of the late nineteenth-century had focused on the mob and the crowd (Leach, 1992), scholars of the early twentieth-century began turning their attention towards rational social groupings and systems, such as business, industry, labor unions, the school, and the economic system. This is not surprising given that

social institutions of all types—political parties, law offices, universities, government agencies—all multiplied and grew, contributing to increased bureaucracy and regulation in all spheres of life. As Robert Wiebe (1967) noted, by the war years, "a bureaucratic orientation now defined a basic part of the nation's discourse. The values of continuity and regularity, functionality and rationality, administration and management set the form of problems and outlined their alternative solutions" (p. 295). As these institutions proliferated, so too did scholarly work on the topic of social institutions and social control.

For many authors, the notion of social control carried no negative connotation. For example, George Payne—then the Dean of Education at New York University—viewed social control as a form of education that involved changing the social behavior of an individual or group (Payne, 1927). Forms of social control included formal education as provided by the school or church as well as informal education provided by the family or peer group. Formal and informal institutions—including commerce, industry, the press, and the theater—also functioned as mechanisms of social control. All played a central (and not necessarily coercive) role in regulating social behavior by helping to transmit social traditions, establish new social patterns, and create new tools of progress. George Herbert Mead took a similar position, viewing social control as an inevitable part of individual development; an individual's thought and behavior were said to be socially controlled whenever he or she took on or assumed the attitudes of social others, something he believed was necessary to development given that "any self is a social self" (Mead, 1925, p. 276). Psychologist Knight Dunlap, who by 1934 had attempted to build social psychology on the foundation of a study of desires, also viewed social control as natural and necessary for regulating and satisfying individual desires in order to accommodate group life. Indeed, it was widely acknowledged that the regulation of individual behavior was a necessary

and natural part of social life. For others, however, social regulation was more problematic.

While institutions seemed necessary, their regulatory power produced anxieties. For social

philosopher James Hayden Tufts, institutions provided much-needed stability in a world that

seemed to be constantly in flux: "It brings a sense of direction, and organizes impulses, habits,

and collective strength to deal with the situation of conflict" (Tufts, 1935, p. 139). However, like

Dewey, he expressed concern regarding the role of personal liberty in the midst of a democracy

where much power was centralized within a small number of institutions.

While authors such as these considered the philosophical meaning of institutions for

individual life, other authors had begun studying these institutions intensely, incorporating the

topic into their respective disciplines. Sociologists studied a variety of institutions, including

everything from the family (Sanderson, 1933) to the Chicago Real Estate Board (Hughes, 1931).

Others began forming intricate social theories of the nature, birth, growth, and dissolution of

social institutions. Sociologist Stuart Chapin, who played a major role in promoting a scientific,

statistics-based sociology, developed an extensive theory of institutions. In an attempt to make

these large, complicated structures amenable to scientific study, Chapin (1928) parsed them up

into what he saw as the major components of institutions: attitudes, conventional behavior

patterns, symbolic cultural objects, and oral and written traditions. He held that all of these things

could and should be studied quantitatively, though the tools had not yet been developed.[47]

Psychologists oriented towards behaviorism also began to tackle the topic of institutions. Social

psychologist J. R. Kantor (1924) suggested that, given the prevalence and power of institutions

in American life, the entire field of social psychology might in fact be built on the foundation of

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[47] Chapin made serious and extensive attempts to quantify the growth of social institutions by sifting through data on the adoption of certain customs or institutional approaches. Using such a technique he plotted, for example, frequency curves and growth cycles illustrating the adoption of the city manager plan by various cities over a set period of time (Chapin, 1928).

a study of institutions. He suggested that institutions be considered as stimuli to individual

responses; social psychology would therefore become the study of individual attitudes and

behaviors in response to institutional stimuli.

Others believed institutions should not be parsed up into components or perceived as

simple stimuli, but should instead be thoroughly studied as objective entities. Charles Judd, the

Director of the Department of Education at the University of Chicago, argued that the study of

institutions required little attention to individual attitudes or behaviors (Judd, 1931). He viewed

institutions as powerful social forces, "reacting on the individual and determining in large

measure his thinking and behavior" (Judd, 1926, p. 3). The ubiquity of institutions made

understanding them on their own terms even more important:

> Modern society has reached the stage in its evolution when it aggressively imposes its
>
> institutions on the individual. It has gone so far as to set up special agencies in its schools
>
> in order to insure the transformation of every child, so far as possible, into a being able
>
> and willing to conform to the social pattern of action and thought (1926, p. 333)

He urged social scientists to focus on institutions such as government, education, money and

language, rather than on the psychological channels through which they exercise their influence.

By 1935, the study of institutions had indeed become so commonplace that the topics of

institutions and their role in social control was becoming a standard part of the sociology

curriculum (Bernard, 1935).

Allport and the Study of Social Institutions

Like other social and behavioral scientists, Floyd Allport also turned his attention to the

study of social institutions and social control in the 1920s and 1930s. This was not, however, a

new topic for Allport. As early as 1924, it was clear that Allport saw social control as a central

force in the habits and behaviors of the individual. In a discussion of social conditioning, for example, he noted that politicians make use of previously conditioned emotions and behavior to induce feeling in the individual:

> The political orator has only to mention the 'orphan children' or the 'rights of the people' to reduce his audience to a state of tender compassion or righteous indignation…As a means of social control, whether for good or for ill, this arousing of sentiment through language stimuli is a process of inestimable significance" (1924a, p. 97).

Such "emotional reservoirs," he argued, should be used for more constructive purposes.

The topic of social control was also central to Allport's early examinations of personality, which were very focused on the traits of ascendance and submission (Allport & Allport, 1921). With his brother Gordon, Allport argued that these two personality patterns are central: in any relationship, one person is likely to become the "master" while the other "yields and adjusts his behavior to the control of the first" (1924a, p. 119). In the 1924 textbook, Allport indeed suggested that nearly all of individual learning and adjustment grows from attempts to master or control the environment. In turn, individuals come to serve as central figures in the social environment of others, and come to be controlled by them as well. Through these individual attempts at social control grows the entire system of social control which, once it is institutionalized, becomes a central force in the life of the individual: "The edicts of government and public opinion, in rumor or print, direct his thought and conduct…These forms of social control are 'institutionalized'; through them, by means of language, each individual is trained and controlled" (Allport, 1924a, pp. 197-198).

Given his demonstrated early interest in social control, it is not surprising that Allport kept informed of the burgeoning social science literature on social institutions and social control

in the 1920s and 1930s. Sociologists, anthropologists, and psychologists who had set about

studying the day-to-day functioning of these myriad institutions therefore found themselves once

again confronting a familiar foe as they tried to conceptualize this novel group-level concept. By

the 1930s, Allport's position on collective concepts was in fact somewhat more moderate. He

continued to assert that such concepts were not objective, scientific entities and held no

explanatory power, but his writings during this period demonstrate an increased sensitivity to the

need for a basic understanding of culture, institutions, and other social groupings. For example,

in a 1931 book chapter, he and his student Dale Hartman noted that psychologists had much to

glean from the work of anthropologists and sociologists, particularly from their thorough and

useful surveys of cultural traits and trends (Allport & Hartman, 1931). Such studies, they noted,

would "stimulate fresh thought and imagination in human research" (p. 350). As early as 1925,

Allport was suggesting that social psychology—which he saw as now being firmly established as

the science of interindividual stimulation and response—had left a large portion of the social

realm untouched. He saw much promise in the exchange of knowledge between the various

social and behavioral sciences (Allport, 1925). In a 1925 article, he noted, for example, that "the

liaison between psychology and anthropology seems interesting and full of promise" (p. 569).

Similarly, in a 1927 article on Charles Judd's theory of institutions, Allport noted that

sociological descriptions of institutions "have a real value in pointing out ranges of human

phenomena which the isolated laboratory psychologist would never see" (Allport, 1927b, p.

178).[48]

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[48] The reasons for Allport's change of heart in the 1920s and 1930s are not immediately apparent. It seems likely that it resulted in large part from the forceful and sometimes very sophisticated critiques from other social and behavioral scientists. In his 1974 autobiography, he notes that by the 1930s, he realized his pure individual determinism was a view "which sociologists had rightly criticized as slighting the actual social reality" (Allport, 1974, p. 16). It should also be noted that Allport's increasing acceptance of interdisciplinarity mirrored a more general trend of disciplinary cooperation fueled perhaps in part by the newly created Social Science Research Council and their preference for funding interdisciplinary research (Fisher, 1993).

Yet despite these more tempered views, Allport continued to bemoan the fallacy of employing group level phenomena as causative factors in the production of individual behavior. Allport began to point out the "institutional fallacy" in the writings and theories of social scientists, where institutions were conceptualized as objective entities comprised of something more than individual attitudes and behaviors. The institutional fallacy was essentially a more specific form of the group fallacy. In his discussions of it, Allport took particular issue with the ways in which social scientists had dealt with the topic of social control, writing about institutions as though they controlled the behavior of the individual. Critiquing Charles Judd's work on institutional control, Allport wrote,

> to say that 'society controls the individual' is an assertion of a metaphysical
> character…To indicate exactly who or what it is that does the controlling, who is
> controlled, and how the controlling is brought about in terms of a specific and concrete
> event would be to make a statement quite in harmony with the method of natural science
> (Allport, 1927b, p. 178)

For Allport, to say that an institution such as the state or the church controls the individual obscures the fact that individuals such as "popes, churchmen, or rulers" control behavior through "obedient attitudes of citizens or worshippers" (p. 178). Allport continued to call for a more scientific analysis of institutions and other group-level concepts.[49]

Allport's writings from this period make it increasingly clear that his concerns regarding the scientific conceptualization of group-level concepts were very much related to his concerns regarding their potentially coercive role in everyday life. Specifically, Allport believed that to

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[49] Allport also critiqued Stuart Chapin's concept of institutions, but was more sympathetic to it presumably because Chapin's conception was more psychological, breaking institutions down into psychological components of attitudes and behaviors. In a 1934 letter, Allport writes to Chapin saying he is happy to see they are both on the same track in their studies and suggesting that Chapin does a better job of attending to the material aspects of institutions than he does (Allport 1934b).

speak of institutions as independent entities would grant them even greater control. When institutions are spoken of as something "more than" a compilation of individual habits, attitudes, and behaviors, they appear far more powerful and immutable and less open to revision and critique. This leads to the assumption that when the institutional order conflicts with individual behavior, the only solution—or at least the easier solution—is to adjust the individual to the existing institution. Allport suggested that such a state of affairs masks the fact that institutions were, for the most part, initially established to meet the needs of individuals: "The institution as such becomes a kind of environment to which the individual must be adjusted through mechanisms peculiar to his biological nature" (Allport, 1926, p. 550). Allport urged for the dissolution of this myth of the personified institution as a major step toward the reinstatement of individual self-expression:

> A realistic attitude toward these institutions would have the effect of minimizing their potency for social control, of breaking them up, and of establishing new adjustments productive of greater individual freedom. Most of us would probably agree that this would be a desirable result" (Allport, 1926, p. 551)

So long as institutions were conceptualized as something over and above individuals, institutional controls would be viewed as eternal laws, breeding increased conformity rather than individual freedom and creativity. During the 1930s, Allport's work therefore became focused on providing a new outlook on institutions. This involved exposing the individual behaviors, habits, and attitudes behind so-called institutions and attempting to persuade the public that a "truly democratic" (Allport, 1944) way of life required a new outlook on social institutions.

Rethinking Institutions: The J-Curve Hypothesis

On May 10, 1926 all classes at Syracuse University were dismissed for two hours while students completed a questionnaire measuring their attitudes. Completion of the questionnaire was mandatory; students were penalized with a "double-cut"[50] if they did not arrive at the designated testing area. When they arrived, the students were faced with an extensive questionnaire asking them to express their opinions and attitudes on various issues by checking off one of a number of possible responses. The questionnaire, comprised of 75 items, asked students whether they would rather be popular or smart, how often they had cheated on examinations, what they believed was necessary for living "the good life," and what was wrong with present religious practices. They answered questions about their fraternities, their reasons for coming to college, and the ways in which they chose their peer groups. By the end of the two hours, 4,248 students had completed the questionnaire and the testing staff began compiling the data with a Powers Accounting Corporation punch and counting sorter.

When the data from the "Syracuse University Reaction Study" (Katz & Allport, 1931) were finally compiled and examined, some interesting results emerged. Liberal arts students found their college work to be a poor outlet for self-expression. Most students attended Syracuse because it was close to home. Many felt the administration had given them little assistance in choosing a vocation. Students did not exclude others from their social groups based on economic status, but exclusion did result from differences in nationality, morals, and religion. The majority of students admitted to having cheated on at least one exam or quiz. Indeed, the findings provided much for the University administration to ponder.

The study authors, however, seemed most interested in one finding: the nature of the curvatures in the graphical representations of the opinion data. Allport and his graduate student

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[50] Cursory searches of university and college catalogues and bulletins from the period seem to indicate that a "double cut" is a penalty where one absence counts as two. Many institutions seemed to implement this penalty in weeks surrounding holidays, when students were more likely to skip classes.

Daniel Katz had found that, in many instances, student opinion did not follow the normal curve

frequently seen in physical data, where the majority of responses pile up in the middle of a graph

and taper off gradually towards the tails of the distribution. Instead, these distributions were

highly skewed, sometimes positively and sometimes negatively: the majority of students'

opinions piled up at the lower or higher extreme of the scale. Instead of depicting the normal

curve, the data often resembled a J-shape or, if the data were negatively skewed, an inverted J-

shape. This was particularly true when the data were parsed up by social or religious groupings,

such as was the case when, for example, the responses for Protestants and Catholics were viewed

separately.

  Allport and Katz suggested that while some might view this as an error in the scale, it

may be more accurately viewed as a reflection of institutional attitudes and behaviors. They

suggested that these responses reflected "some specific agency of teaching or propaganda acting

throughout the group" (p. 345). These forms of "common stimulation" within a group resulted in

an alignment of attitudes and behaviors and affected the intensity of the attitudes. When these

skewed distributions appeared, often overriding differences due to gender or temperament,

researchers were, they believed, measuring loyalty to an institution:

> The definition and possible measurement of the 'power of institutions' may be found to
>
> lie in such skewed and concentrated forms of distribution of attitudes as those in our
>
> results. This method for institutional measurement in psychological terms appears to have
>
> possibilities for research (Katz & Allport, 1931, p. 351)

Katz and Allport went on to suggest that the findings pointed to the exciting possibility of

creating similar scales for measuring loyalty, submission, and participation in a variety of groups

and institutions. For Allport, this was likely particularly exciting, since it seemed to provide a psychological method of looking at sociological concepts.

As Katz and Allport were working through these data, another of Allport students, Milton C. Dickens,[51] was gathering data regarding motorist behavior at intersections in Syracuse and Los Angeles. They found that at intersections with cross traffic but no traffic signs or signals, motorists usually slowed somewhat, with a smaller minority stopping completely and a small minority failing to slow at all—a situation reflected in normally distributed data. However, at intersections with stop signs, the majority of motorists came to a complete stop, while a small minority moved slowly through the intersection without stopping and an even smaller minority slowed only slightly—a situation reflected in their data distribution, which resembled an inverted J-shape (Allport, Dickens, & Schanck, 1932).

Allport's student Richard Schanck had also uncovered similar findings in his research on a small, relatively remote rural community outside of Syracuse (Schanck, 1932). In an examination of public and private attitudes, Schanck asked community members to indicate: 1. the behavior or attitude they deemed appropriate for themselves as members of a certain group (e.g., Methodists) and 2. the behavior or attitude that they endorsed privately as individuals. In the case of public but not private attitudes, Schanck again uncovered evidence that seemed to support a J-shaped distribution. For example, Schanck questioned the Methodists in the community about their attitudes toward card-playing.[52] When told to indicate the response they believed was appropriate for them as Methodists, about 90 percent of them responded that they would only play games that did not include face cards. When asked to respond with their own

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[51] After receiving his Ph.D. from Syracuse, Dickens went on to become a rather central figure in the field of speech and communication studies, promoting interdisciplinary research in the field and serving as the president of the Western Speech Association in 1956 (Dickens & Williams, 1964).

[52] Methodists frequently shunned card-playing and other forms of amusement. Face cards were of particular concern since they were considered to be associated with the devil ("On relaxing Methodist rigors," 1921).

private attitude, a small percent indicated they would not play games involving face cards, the majority took a more moderate position and said they would play any game unless it involved gambling, and a small percent said they would play any game even if it involved gambling. The first distribution was J-shaped while the second more closely approximated the normal distribution.

This early research led to what Allport later described as his most important work[53]: the J-curve hypothesis of conforming behavior. The theory was most fully expounded in a 1934 article published in the *Journal of Social Psychology*. Citing the data gathered by himself and his students, Allport (1934a) argued that the J-curve was an accurate representation of conformity responses, whereby most individuals conform completely to a given institutional norm or rule. A small minority demonstrate nonconforming attitudes and behavior, likely due to tendencies of personality and chance. Allport suggested that the curve represented a struggle between two opposing forces: conformity producing agencies, which call on us to perform; and biological inertia, which calls on us to exert the least energy possible. For example, conforming agencies call on motorists to stop at stop signs and red lights, while biological inertia makes it more likely that they will cruise through intersections without stopping. These two forces, combined with personality tendencies and chance, dictate the nature of the curve and illuminate the ins and outs of institutionalized behavior (Allport, 1934a).

For Allport, the J-curve represented what he called a continuum of purposive behavior or a *telic continuum.* Responses in these situations represent the extent to which an individual fulfills the purpose set forth by an institution. Arriving at work on time represents complete fulfillment of the purpose of the factory, for example. A telic continuum, he argued, also has an

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[53] In response to a 1952 survey on "Factors in Psychological Leadership," Allport was asked what he considered to be his most important work; he responded with the J-Curve ("Factors in Psychological Leadership," 1952).

underlying *empirical continuum*, which is objective and has nothing to do with institutional

purpose. Such a continuum would not involve categories such as "on time," "half an hour late,"

or "an hour late." Instead, steps along the continuum are based on objective physical units, such

as minutes or hours. Data distributed on this continuum takes on a shape that more closely

approximates the normal curve, This was partially due to the fact that it included categories that

preceded "on time". Some workers fulfill the purpose of the institution by arriving early. In an

empirical distribution, these workers represent the minority on the lower end of the x-axis. The

resulting distribution approximated normality, but often appeared leptokurtic, resembling a

double J-curve. Allport and his students graphed these institutional behaviors in terms of telic

and empirical continuums when possible.

For Allport, the importance of the J-curve's ability to illustrate the curvature of

institutional behaviors lay in the possibility of trying to map institutional controls onto biological

needs and drives. In his 1934 article on the topic, he suggested that scientists might plot first

what behavior looks like naturally—that is, under conditions without institutional controls set

up—and then attempt to create institutions and controls that allow the fullest expression of this

natural state while still maintaining order. For example, Allport suggested that biological drives

and inertia would dictate that motorists stop as little as possible, exerting as little energy as

possible to get from one location to another. Traffic lights, therefore, should be timed such that a

motorist is required to stop as little as possible (Allport, 1934a). Failing to consider the

biological make-up of individuals, Allport argued, would result in a maladjustment between

individuals and institutions. In addition to conditioning individuals to respond to institutional

controls, institutional controls should be altered to fit individual tendencies. Allport believed the

J-curve made it possible to look at the distribution of behaviors under a particular institutional

control, which opened up the possibility of examining the differences between this curve and that

which would be produced by biological drives and personality differences alone. By doing so,

one would "allow free play for the biological and psychological differences of the majority of

individuals" (Allport, Dickens, & Schanck, 1932, p. 242).

In addition, it becomes clear in Allport's writings that he saw the J-curve approach as a

method of demystifying institutional controls. By providing a clearer picture of the processes of

control, the J-curve would perhaps make it clear to scientists that institutions were in fact

composed of individual behaviors and attitudes (Allport, 1934a). However, this breaking down

of "instituuional fictions" might also affect the general public. In Allport and Katz's large-scale

study of attitudes at Syracuse, they had found that students who had more loyalty to and belief in

institutions as objects in and of themselves were also more likely to willingly adhere to

institutional controls. This was the case, for example, with students belonging to a fraternity

"Students who accepted the institutional fiction were likely to set higher store upon

administrative controls generally…The individualistic fraternity students, on the other

hand…were more disposed toward a critical and realistic view of prerogatives, responsibilities,

and personal values (Katz & Allport, 1931, p. 352). For Allport, this seemed to indicate that

dissolving institutional fictions could have significant effects not only for science but also for the

ways in which citizens viewed, experienced, and adhered to the myriad of institutional controls

that operated in their daily lives (Allport, 1934a). Indeed, the J-Curve was significant enough for

Allport that by 1931, he was planning a second volume of his 1924 text that would specifically

address "The Societal Behaviors of Individuals" (Allport, 1931b).

Allport and his students published a handful of articles outlining the hypothesis and

sharing the results of studies that demonstrated the J-curve in a variety of political, economic,

and religious institutions. Some scholars began applying Allport's method to conformity

situations with considerable success (Britt, 1940; Frederiksen, Frank, & Freeman, 1939; Graham,

1940), while others found results that were mixed in their support for the regularity of the J-

curve and suggested minor modifications (Waters, 1941). The J-curve approach was even

featured in a 1951 laboratory manual for social psychologists (Ray, 1951). In the end, however,

the J-curve garnered more criticism than support. Allport had noted that a situation may be

defined as a conformity situation when 50% of observations fall into the category of complete

conformity. This assertion was critiqued by George Dudycha, who suggested it was an arbitrary

number. In general, Dudycha (1937) argued that the J-curve was not an exemplary curve with a

known distribution, as was the case with the normal curve. It did not have regular, reliable

properties and could not therefore be characterized as a statistical regularity, as Allport seemed

to indicate.[54] Furthermore, Dudycha analyzed some of the data of Allport's students and found

that when the curves were actually tested (rather than just plotted), some were in fact normal.

Other critics pointed to a simple yet very important difficulty with the approach: the

curve tended to reflect the scale used. For example, in the case of lateness to work, behaviors

such as "5 minutes early," "10 minutes early," and "on time" would all represent one value or

step on the scale, resulting in a build-up of cases in that step and producing a J-shaped

distribution (Fearing & Krise, 1941). Although Allport's students responded to some of the

earlier critiques (Dickens & Solomon, 1938), the J-curve seemed riddled with difficulties and

was undoubtedly overshadowed by the sophisticated surveys, attitude measures, and opinion

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[54] Zubin (1943) and Katzoff (1943) suggested that Allport's data were discrete rather than continuous and both attempted to redefine the J-curve based on the binomial distribution, but the approach was never adopted by others

scales beginning to develop around the time of the Second World War and refined thereafter.[55] It

therefore began to disappear from the literature by the 1950s, as Allport himself also moved on

to new topics and approaches that built on the ideas uncovered through his J-curve research.

<div align="center">Institutional Behavior and a New Individualism</div>

As Allport and his students gathered this extensive body of data on institutional behavior,

Allport also began publishing a number of popular articles discussing the role of institutional

control, conformity, and institutional habits in the day-to-day life of the average American. Many

of these articles were aimed at guiding citizens toward a more realistic view of their world and

helping them find ways to evaluate their place in it. Like other social and behavioral scientists of

the 1920s and 1930s, Allport was concerned with the fit between the individual and the social in

a democratic society (Morawski & St. Martin, 2011). He was particularly concerned with the

increased complexity of the social system in the early twentieth century and the effects of this

change on the autonomy of individual citizens who were subjected to the nearly constant

influence of propagandists, advertisers, politicians, and other sources of social influence. For

Allport, the layperson—without defenses against such influence—would have difficulty thinking

rationally. He therefore suggested that one of the tasks of the psychologist might be to help

citizens acquire insight into themselves and their world. As he stated in a 1926 lecture at

Winthrop College, such assistance was gravely needed in the rapidly changing world of the early

twentieth century: "We are like ships which, in dangerous seas, need not only great power and

better driving machinery, but also more trustworthy maps and an abler helmsman" (Allport,

1927a, p. 570).

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[55] Samuel Stouffer's World War II research on attitudes in the Army serves as an apt example of advances in this area resulting directly from the War (Stouffer et al., 1949). Sarah Igo (2007) demonstrates advances made in surveys and public opinion polls around this time as well.

For Allport, the difficulty lay in the fact that rather than being active social participants, citizens had become too easily controlled by others, unaware and uncritical of the ways in which other individuals control them. This, he believed was due in part to the fact that they viewed such control as emanating from metaphysical entities—namely, institutions:

> The real processes of control are thus concealed for people believe that the controlling agency is not specific individuals, but some higher metaphysical entity, such as society, the church, or the state. And since this higher being is supposed to be mysteriously endowed either with the common human purpose or with divine wisdom, it is regarded as a safe regulator of human conduct" (Allport, 1928a, p. 383).

Without a realistic view of institutions and without greater insight, citizens are easily deceived and influenced and are vulnerable to widespread commercial exploitation (Allport, 1927a). Allport suggested that one of the central tasks of social psychology was to help citizens adopt a more critical attitude toward institutions and all mechanisms of control by dissolving such fallacies, instructing citizens on how to resist the influence of pervasive propaganda, sensational journalism, and well-designed advertisements. Allport argued that rather than using psychology to aid the development of business and industry where some individuals manipulate others to serve their own ends (Allport, 1928a) it should be used to help the vast majority of citizens think rationally about these systems. As he bluntly stated in 1928, the goal of social psychology was "the releasing of individual values from their unseen control by other individuals" (p. 386).

Allport's views on the power of institutions and the obedience of citizens to these institutions were fully laid out in a 1933 book titled *Institutional Behavior*. The book included a number of the popular articles that he had published in the late 1920s and early 1930s in *Harper's Magazine*, along with many chapters containing new material. It is in this work that

Allport's distaste for American institutions becomes strikingly evident as he characterizes most institutions as "dishonest and dangerous" (p. ix) and operating in a manner that furthers the "power and greed of men who would exploit their fellows" (p. ix). The goal of the 1933 book was to help citizens take a closer look at such institutions, so that they might analyze their actual functions and purposes:

> If we would make true progress in understanding our social order, if we would take the first step toward extricating ourselves from our present confusion, it is my conviction that we must submit these controls of our thinking to a careful analysis. We must strive for a clearer insight into these subtle and pervasive illusions" (p. ix)

As Allport noted in the book's foreword, the book was not intended as a scientific treatise, but rather as a platform for thinking about and discussing social problems through an analysis of social institutions such as government, business, industry, the family, education, and religion.

Allport's *Institutional Behavior* and his work in the 1930s more generally demonstrate a significant shift in his approach to group-level concepts. As he grappled with conformity behaviors and examined data on attitudes and opinions of a variety of social groups, his concern with the scientific issues surrounding the reality of group-level concepts was overshadowed by an increasing concern with the social implications of belief in institutions as entities. In the first chapter of the work, for example, he discussed the scientific reality of institutions and noted that the question of their reality was in fact unanswerable, requiring that some single criterion of reality be agreed upon. For Allport, however, the scientific reality of institutions was no longer the most important issue:

> The important question, however, about institutions is not the problem of their ultimate reality, but what they mean to us as methods of approaching our experience. Although we

may never know whether institutions are independently real, it does make a considerable

difference in our thinking and living if we *act as though* they are real[56]

Though Allport affirmed that his study of institutions was in fact a study of "institutional

behavior" conceptualized as explicitly observable individual behaviors, the work demonstrates

his acknowledgement of the psychological importance of institutions in individual life. In

essence, the 1933 book examines the consequences of believing in the reality of institutions and

the effects that such beliefs have on individual thought and behavior.

Allport began the work by noting how complicated and institutionalized day-to-day life

had become, where even the simplest of daily behaviors and needs—such as eating and hunger—

had become part of vast institutional complexes that included production, transportation, and

distribution. Such institutions, he argued, had become so ubiquitous and so commonplace that

they seemed almost natural and beyond scrutiny. Furthermore, the pervasive nature of

institutions had made it seem impossible to study and consider the well-being of individuals

separate from or in tandem with the well-being of institutions. The result, he argued, was

increased dissatisfaction among the majority: "while our societal experts are dallying with

institutions and telling us how to cooperate through them so that they will solve our problems,

the individuals of society are faced with harassing and well-nigh insoluble dilemmas" (p. 33). In

other words, by failing to pay attention to individual needs, experts had failed to build adequate

social institutions.

Allport was also highly concerned with what he saw as a completely uncritical faith in

the correctness of social institutions, which produced a social order characterized by a complete

lack of harmony between individual and environment. Allport expressed repeated bafflement at

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[56] Allport's concerns about the potential social dangers of reifying group concepts during these years is strikingly similar to Ralph Barton Perry's concerns in the context of the First World War, as discussed in chapter 2 (see pages 52 to 53).

the fact that this faith in institutions remained even as the social institutions of the 1930s crumbled during the Great Depression. For Allport, the most concerning aspect of this faith in institutions was the role it played in perpetuating and masking mechanisms of social control. The central role played by institutions in individual life, combined with the faith individuals have in such institutions stifles critical thinking and encourages "institutional idolatry" (p. 40), where individual emotions and sentiments become firmly attached the institution and it becomes almost an object of worship. As Allport wrote, "We think of them as established in some ideal realm, immune from human contamination, and unchangeable for all time" (p. 40).

Institutional Behavior, along with the popular press articles and presentations that Allport gave at this time, were aimed at removing this mysticism from the public's thinking about institutions. In the concluding sections of the book, he reiterates to the reader the dangers of blindly following institutions:

> When an individual allows his 'institutions' to do his thinking for him, it follows that the thinking is not done. Or worse: the man who entrusts himself to the guidance of his 'infallible institutions' is in grave danger of being led by the nose by men who have sufficient cleverness and duplicity to exploit him" (pp. 478-479).

He then went on to address the difficult question of how to change the institutional nature of American life. Allport did not suggest any kind of revolution, noting that such organizing would undoubtedly only lead to another form of control or an alternative form of institutionalism. Instead, he suggested that citizens adopt an attitude of self-determination in order to avoid institutional coercion; in doing so, he suggests, citizens would be capable of slowly changing the social system:

> I would urge, as the only effective method, the determination of all individuals
> consistently to live their own lives. I would urge that they refuse to be coerced by a creed
> of social determinism or by an illusion of the 'Great Society' or of the demands of 'social
> progress' as embodied in institutions rather than in men and women. If enough
> individuals come, through independent and sincere conviction, to this awakening, the
> control of cultural changes can be achieved without new forms of organization and
> without the use of institutional habit" (p. 499)

The important thing for Allport was that this change toward self-determination be self-determined, involving no propaganda or promised utopian outcome. Instead, this "new individualism" would involve a new approach to education that attempted to foster critical attitudes with respect to the social world.

Conclusion

Institutional Behavior was, for the most part, positively reviewed in the literature.[57] Though some still had reservations about Allport's mechanical and individualistic interpretations of culture and society, his popular writing style, his plea for a rethinking of social institutions in the United States, and his call for a more informed citizenry seemed to strike a chord with many (Dollard, 1934, Hertlzer, 1934; Wyckoff, 1934). The social problems of the 1930s, particularly, the breakdown of the economic system, had encouraged many social scientists to turn a critical eye on the form and functioning of American society (Crunden, 1972). Allport's concern with social control and individual freedom indeed reflected a larger concern with the effects of an

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[57] It is interesting to note that in 1972, Allport learned Greenwood Press was reprinting the book. He said that a reprint would compromise his reputation and threatened to sue the press (Allport, 1972). The book was not reprinted.

increasingly complex society evident in the 1920s and magnified in the 1930s. As Crunden (1972) explains,

> In contrast to the self *in* society, the twenties came to emphasize the self *apart* from society. Society became an environment unfriendly to the growth of art, of spirit, of freedom…Instead of reforming society, an individual should cultivate his 'self' (p. 72).

Such sentiments were indeed in line with Allport's own stated belief that "a better world can only be a world of better and of freer individuals" (Allport, 1933, p. 520). For Allport and other scholars witnessing the depths of the Depression, the time had come for major changes in American life. During the 1920s, Allport had come to believe that social psychology had a major role to play in these change first, through the measurement of institutional behaviors and second, through the facilitation of critical attitudes among citizens. By the 1930s, Allport had clearly recognized that understanding the social required a more complex approach. Studying the types of simple, face-to-face reactions of the laboratory—as he had done in his dissertation research on social facilitation—would not suffice in a world where face-to-face contact was but a small and diminishing aspect of an increasingly complex social life. While broadening his methodologically individualistic approach to the study of social life, he simultaneously produced popular works that called for a return to a simpler form of moral individualism.

The difficult task of studying and facilitating social change, however, became even more complicated as the 1940s approached. Critical calls for social change and the very evident focus on individual self-development would soon be put on hold, as it became increasingly clear that the United States would soon be involved in another world conflict (Crunden, 1972). The War would permanently alter the field of social psychology and Allport himself would once again

alter the contours of his own individualism, as it was tested by the issues of patriotism, solidarity,

and democracy during wartime.

Chapter 5

"A Tragic Confusion of Values:" Allportian Individualism and the Second World War

As the 1930s came to a close, Floyd Allport—now 50 years of age—was hard at work conducting research, finding positions and publication opportunities for his graduate students, finishing up projects on personality measurement and the J-curve hypothesis, and working on a revision of his *Social Psychology.* Like the rest of the nation, however, he kept a close watch on the news regarding the political situation in Europe. The German invasion of Poland in 1939 and the declaration of war by Britain and France shortly thereafter greatly impacted American opinion regarding the country's neutrality. The fall of France in 1940 and the continued expansion of the German invasion of Europe made it increasingly clear that a second world war was likely to become a reality. By 1941, Roosevelt had begun offering aid to Britain and the Soviet Union. The Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor in December of 1941 officially signaled the beginning of America's entry into the War (Fortescue, 2000; Kennedy, 2004). Allport followed the war closely and in fact had a personal interest in it due to the involvement of his children. All three of Allport's children would eventually end up contributing to the war effort. His eldest son became a sergeant in the Army Air Corp, his daughter was a corporal in the Women's Air Corps, and his youngest son Floyd was a private first class in the Army (Allport, 1953).

During this period, Allport, like so many other scholars, began to turn his attention almost solely to the social and psychological aspects of the war. His individualistic philosophy would become even more pronounced during the war years, as the perceived threat of totalitarianism provided a political example of what he viewed as the dangers of collectivist thought. Just as social institutions had served as his central point of attack in the 1930s, nations and the "nationalistic fallacy" became his focus in the 1940s. The moralistic aspects of his

individualism became increasingly prominent during this period; rather than focusing on the scientific demerits of collective concepts, he began to concentrate more and more on the potent psychological effects of groups for the individual and the role that collective concepts could play in undermining democracy. For Allport, the War illuminated a "tragic confusion of values" in 1940s America, where the wealth, prosperity, and well-being of nations was given precedence over the well-being of citizens. Although Allport recognized the need for a united, supportive home front during the war, he grappled with the task of identifying methods of securing citizen support without relying on nationalistic or collectivist appeals. For Allport, the value of individual agency and individual participation in the political system had to be valued over the well-being of the nation. Nearly every aspect of Allport's scholarship during this period— including his empirical research, his public presentations, and his popular writings—was devoted to unmasking nationalistic appeals and redefining the role of the individual in a democratic nation at war.

<div align="center">Social Psychology and the Second World War</div>

The two world wars were critical periods in the history of American psychology. Psychologists volunteered and were called upon to lend their expertise to the war effort, resulting in vast opportunities, extensive resources, and massive growth for the profession (Capshew, 1999; Herman, 1995). Though few subfields of psychology had emerged by 1917, some areas of expertise were in higher demand than others. Psychological testing is perhaps the most well-known example of a field that thrived during the First World War. Although the creation, use, and administration of tests was wrought with difficulties, the wide-scale testing that occurred in the U. S. military during the War resulted in increased resources for and public awareness of the field. Historians view the War as being largely responsible for the establishment of testing as a

legitimate area of study and practice (Kevles, 1968). Other areas that developed and grew during this time include clinical and industrial psychology (Benjamin, 1986).

During the First World War, social psychology was still largely undefined; as previously noted, a few textbooks had attempted to delineate the field (Ross, 1908; McDougall, 1908) and a few courses were being taught, but the field was still very much in an early stage of formation (Collier, Minton, & Reynolds, 1991). Because of this, it failed to play any kind of substantive role in the war effort. On the eve of the Second World War, however, the field had moved beyond the state of infancy and its specialists were therefore better positioned to offer expertise and assistance (Herman, 1995). Floyd Allport's text had provided a basic and identifiable—if still somewhat contentious—scientific foundation for the field and several lines of seemingly promising research had begun to emerge. These included Muzafer Sherif's studies of social norms (Sherif, 1936), Allport's studies of conformity (1934; 1939), and Kurt Lewin's studies of group dynamics and leadership (Lewin, Lippitt, & White, 1939). The pre-War period was also one in which the study of attitudes came of age, leading to the development of scales for measuring public feeling and sentiment toward racial and ethnic groups, religion, prohibition, crime rates, and a variety of other social groups, issues, and topics (Peterson & Thurstone, 1933). In addition, the prewar years saw the establishment of the Society for the Psychological Study of Social Issues, a group that worked to use social psychological ideas, principles, and research to address and solve social problems (Finison, 1979). Indeed, the scope of social psychology and its potential reach during an international conflict was far greater in the 1930s and 1940s than it had been during the First World War.

The distinct climate of the Second World War also helped to encourage the participation of social psychologists. The power of well-orchestrated propaganda campaigns and the damaging

effects of poorly planned ones had been illustrated unmistakably in the work of the Committee

on Public Information, established during the First World War (Kennedy, 2004; Steele, 1970).

This Committee, operated by George Creel, had contributed to the growth of much public

skepticism on government news, reports, and propaganda, resulting in heightened public distrust.

The delivery of effective propaganda campaigns therefore became a significant priority in the

Second World War, as the government sought to avoid a similar situation. The study of citizen

morale also became a priority after the fall of France in 1940, since the defeat was considered to

have been due in part to low morale among soldiers and civilians (Fortescue, 2000; Jackson,

2003). Social psychologists—with their focus on topics such as attitudes, group processes, and

social problems—were suddenly much-sought-after experts.

In the 1930s and 1940s, social psychologists began taking advantage of this situation,

putting their expertise to work and becoming heavily involved in war-related projects and

research. These activities took place within government agencies, inside universities and

colleges, as well as in the community more generally. By 1942, a large number of social

psychologists were employed by Washington agencies (Cartwright, 1948), and perhaps even

more were engaged in war-related research and teaching within the walls of universities and

colleges across the United States. They studied citizen morale (Capshew, 1999; Faye, 2011),

propaganda and home-front rumors (Faye, 2007), citizen attitudes toward wartime issues such as

rationing and war bonds (Capshew, 1999), the attitudes of U. S. soldiers (Herman, 1995), and

racial tensions on the home front (Herman, 1995). It is not surprising that once the war was over,

social psychology grew exponentially. In 1948, the Personality and Social Psychology division

of the American Psychological Association had 339 members; by 1960, it had 1,346 (Tryon,

1963). As Sewell (1989) has noted, the 1940s served as a springboard for the "golden age" of

social psychology, characterized by the classic and memorable experiments of Leon Festinger, Solomon Asch, and Stanley Milgram. Indeed, World War II was a watershed event in the establishment of social psychology as a distinct, legitimate, and socially relevant field of study.[58]

Social Science, Society, and Democracy

Despite their readiness for the war, the social, political, and cultural issues surrounding a wartime democracy proved somewhat problematic for social psychologists and other social scientists as they struggled to define the role of experts in a democracy, to clarify and craft the relationship between objective science and democracy, and to defend against traditionalist or absolutist groups that portrayed science as the cold and relativistic enemy of a democratic social order. In the years leading up to American entry into the war, the topic of democracy had become central in the academic and popular literature. In 1940, the American Library Association published a reading list of the subject consisting of more than 290 titles (Gleason, 1984). As historian Philip Gleason (1984) notes, the threat of totalitarianism had convinced many Americans "that civilization itself was imperiled, and galvanized them to a passionate affirmation of democratic principles" (p. 347). At the same time, however, the First World War had left many people disillusioned, questioning the possibility of a true democracy and the sincerity of the American government in attempting to provide it. The peace and democracy that had been envisioned at the end of the War had not materialized and some believed that the War had led to increased bureaucratic control and the manipulation of public opinion (Purcell, 1973). This increased control, many felt, had taken a toll on individual agency and initiative.

These sentiments were reflected in the academic writing of the time and are best exemplified in the work of John Dewey. As Westhoff (1995) explains, Dewey expressed the

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[58] This "golden age" was quite short-lived. In the 1960s, the field faced a barrage of internal and external critiques, culminating in the "crisis" of the 1970s (Faye, 2012).

belief early on that the increased bureaucratic structure of the United States after World War I had resulted in decreased power for the average citizen, as voters came to exercise less and less control over the direction of an increasingly insulated government. The public, Dewey explained in 1927, had become apathetic and alienated from the political process, a situation that undermined the potential for participatory democracy. For Dewey, the individual had to be a fully participating member of the community and must have the opportunity to affect the direction of the community to which he or she belongs. Furthermore, open access to all sources of information was a necessary precursor to fully informed democratic participation. As Westhoff (1995) notes, Dewey's critique was an important one in the 1920s which were characterized by "a head-on collision between the forces of patriotic fervor and academic freedom, of traditional values and modern intellectual thought" (p. 42).

These sentiments were shared by other social psychologists and gained traction in the years leading up to and following World War II. Floyd Allport's brother Gordon, for example, bemoaned the lack of citizen participation in American democracy (G. W. Allport, 1945), noting that only three in five citizens voted in presidential elections. His solution to the problem, however, was not a call for active participation by each and every citizen in every social sphere of life. Such an expectation, he suggested was unrealistic. Instead, citizens should be expected to be actively involved in some social spheres that are important to them, while other people take more responsibility in other areas that are important to them. G. W. Allport argued that psychologists should be called on to guide the individual into participation in some social sphere of value, thereby nurturing the "democratic personality" (p. 127). The Second World War, Gordon Allport noted, had in fact opened up many areas in which social psychologists could work toward active citizen participation: "Committed to advancing democracy, we have found

tools to work with…There are polling, content analysis, group decision, leadership training, devices for alleviating minority tensions, and many other useful techniques" (p. 128). Indeed, though there were debates regarding the potentials and limitations of citizen participation in the political process, there was general agreement that the nature of American democracy was somewhat problematic and required some considerable rethinking.

As social scientists debated the contours and possibilities of a democratic society, they were confronted with several difficulties. First, they faced a heightened sense of conflict regarding the possibility of value-free science in a democracy that seemed faced with immediate threat. During the interwar years, social scientists had strongly espoused the need for a value-neutral, objective approach to science and social problems. An objective science of society would ostensibly avoid value judgments regarding social order, yet the situation in Europe frequently bolstered personal convictions regarding the necessity of safeguarding democracy (Purcell, 1973). As Purcell notes, "While their scientific predispositions had led many intellectuals in one direction, their moral beliefs and political attitudes pulled them strongly in another. Totalitarianism was an intellectual and emotional challenge to their entire world view" (p. 138). Many scholars struggled to rethink their approach, while others failed to recognize that their own work was imbued with such social and political undertones supporting the notion of democracy.

Social scientists who had so successfully espoused the ideal of a value-free science of society in the opening decades of the twentieth century also found themselves embroiled in a debate with philosophers, other scientists, and theologians who began drawing relationships between objective social science and totalitarianism (Purcell, 1973). Such a value-neutral and morally relativistic science was characterized as a cold, disinterested, and amoral approach to an

increasingly fragile social order. The approach was likened to that used by totalitarian regimes and described as "materialistic" and "anti-human" (Dewey, 1945; Purcell, 1973). What was needed, many authors argued, was not relativism and cold analysis of existing conditions, but rather a return to religion, tradition, and the moral truths and imperatives of an earlier age. John Dewey (1945) would later describe these criticisms as an "organized attack" that characterized science as "inherently materialistic and as usurping the place properly held by the abstract moral precepts" (p. 4). The situation was indeed a very complicated one, as scholars sought to maintain the position of social science as an objective enterprise while simultaneously demonstrating how such sciences could support, serve, or—at the very least—be compatible with the principles of democracy.[59]

The Individual in a Democratic Society: Floyd Allport and the "Scientific Spirit"

In response to these accusations of science, liberal academics began implicitly and explicitly recasting the relationship between science, society, and democracy in a variety of ways. In 1943, a group of academics organized a conference in New York City for this very purpose. The group included John Dewey, economist Harry D. Gideonse, teacher and advocate of progressive education V. T. Thayer, pragmatist philosopher Sidney Hook, and many other scholars from various corners of academia. According to Sidney Hook, one of the central purposes of the conference was to combat the notion that science and naturalism were philosophically akin to Nazism, Fascism, and Communism and that supernatural or religious beliefs were needed to foster democracy. The Conference, Hook wrote, "is committed only to free inquiry into the educational implications of both scientific method and democracy" (Hook,

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[59] There is perhaps no better example of this tension than in the history of the founding and development of the Society for the Psychological Study of Social Issues (SPSSI). From the time of its founding in the interwar years, the scholars that made up the society struggled both internally and with outsiders in regards to the definition of their role as scientists concerned with social problems. Histories of SPSSI provide an excellent overview of this issue in the history of the social and behavioral sciences (cf Rutherford, Cherry, & Unger, 2011).

1945, p. 12). Another contributor described the conference as a direct response to "a new authoritarian movement" characterized by "allegiance to fixed principles, inflexible rules of morality, and unquestioned acceptance of a supernatural interpretation of human experience" (Lindeman, 1944, p. ix). In line with this focus, the participants focused on the inherently democratic nature of science and the authoritarian nature of traditionalism and religion.

The ideology of this group, with its focus on the importance of science, the necessity of experimental testing of ideas, and the provision of education for the average citizen was highly consonant with Floyd Allport's own philosophy. He therefore traveled to New York City in 1944 to attend the second conference of this group, presenting a paper titled "Scientific Spirit and the Common Man" (Allport, 1945a). The conference provided the ideal platform for Allport's developing views on the importance of critical thought, individual freedoms, and the dissolution of collective fictions, particularly in relation to democracy in wartime. For Allport, nurturance of a "scientific spirit" was imperative for the proper functioning and maintenance of a democratic society. Democracy, he argued, required a scientific or, at the very least, moderately critical understanding of society. Because of this, the average citizen should be encouraged to think scientifically, which involves the disinterested, controlled observation of tangible objects. For Allport, disinterestedness was particularly important, and he suggested that the scientific spirit was best characterized as "an attitude of disinterested and selfless curiosity" (p. 55). This attitude or "spirit" should guide the action of citizens in every situation: "One who truly possesses this spirit," he stated, "will pursue the method of science, and it will guide his thinking and his conduct in every circumstance where it is possible or practicable for him to do so" (p. 55). The purpose of education, Allport argued, was to foster this scientific spirit. In this paper, Allport adopts the idea that the scientific spirit, which underlies democratic principles, is a naturally

occurring phenomenon that becomes stifled by social environments that restrain individual agency. For Allport, the educator or politician need not inculcate the individual into science, since "the spirit of the scientific quest *is* latent in nearly every man and woman" (p. 55). Therefore, by fostering such an attitude, educators were simply "giving an opportunity for the unfolding of that which he already possesses" (p. 55). In short, the democratic way, characterized by the scientific spirit, was the correct approach, since it was consonant with the natural development of the individual.

Allport also outlined the unnatural social conditions that suffocate such spirit, including the artificiality of urban life and the establishment and maintenance of collective fictions. As he had done in the 1930s, Allport criticized the mechanized and monotonous nature of urban life, which he viewed as being completely removed from nature and lacking in opportunities for "scientific adventure" (p. 56). Of even greater concern for Allport were the ways in which individual thought, initiative, and curiosity were curbed in such a society. This was directly related to his thoughts on science and democracy. For Allport, one of the keys to both science and democracy was freedom. This included not just visible, easily identifiable freedoms, but also freedom of thought and opinion. Citizens and scientists must be capable of and permitted to question, criticize, and examine every aspect of their world. Traditionalism and the notion of "a natural right or law" prohibits such critical thought "by shutting out the opportunity for raising questions about it…it becomes an obstacle to the scientific inquiry of citizens and to their attack by the scientific method upon the basic problems of their society" (p. 59). Allport also outlined the ways in which several psychological processes such as stereotypes and superficial or wishful thinking impeded the scientific spirit, arguing that such errors were fostered by the emotional, sensationalist, and stereotyped reports of newspapers, magazines, and radio.

One of the greatest impediments to the kind of clear, rational, critical thought required for the scientific spirit, however, was the continued use of collective fictions. This, Allport argued, had become increasingly imperative in wartime, when the fiction of "a corporate national Being, possessed, in its own right, of principles, ideals, honor, sovereignty, and rights" was used to ward off scrutiny and questioning of the conflict. Allport also focused on the ways in which fostering collective fictions enabled totalitarianism in the social order. A focus on the whole (i.e., nations), is adopted at the expense of focusing on benefits to the parts (i.e., individual citizens), providing a firm foundation for totalitarianism. The nation becomes viewed as a machine that must run smoothly, which requires the compliance of the individual parts:

> The parts cannot be free to deviate at odd moments, or to do other kinds of things upon their own initiative. What would happen to the watch if its wheels and pinions should suddenly decide that they would like to take time out and exercise the liberty to reflect, to realize their literary, artistic, or religious values, or to regard themselves and their neighbors as objects of scientific curiosity?" (p. 65).

In this way, collective fictions stifle the scientific spirit, inhibit the democratic way of life, and provide the foundation for individual acquiescence and support in a nationalistic conflict. Throughout the War, Allport was always careful to note that he knew they must win the war and preserve American autonomy and he pointed out that he was willing to make any sacrifice necessary to do so, but he forcefully argued that the war should also heighten awareness of the need to understand nations "disinterestedly, in terms of what explicit human beings are doing" (p. 64). Nationalistic appeals, he argued, would do little more than result in "scientific spirit at its lowest ebb" (p. 63).

Allport's thoughts on the role of collectivist thinking in regards to nations did not arise in the context of the Second World War; instead, these ideas had been formulated in the decade following the First World War. As early as 1927, he had already pointed to the nationalistic fallacy and it is in his writings on nationalism that the moralistic aspects of Allport's individualism are most clearly expressed. He argued that calls to nationalism played upon the group fallacy to incite civilians to action. War would then be perpetuated as politicians, by means of "shameless lies" and "propaganda," further played on this fallacy, evoking patriotism toward the non-existent nation and its elusive symbols (Allport, 1927). He outlined this process, employing the First World War as an example, and concluded that as a result of such personification, "youths…were thus led as individuals to slaughter one another in a war conceived and justified as a struggle between mythical overpersonages, the contending Nations" (p. 299). This analysis of the nationalistic fallacy was anything but an objective assessment of the situation. Allport's previous denouncements of the group concept had been focused primarily on the scientific status of such a concept, with occasional nuances of the social and political significance of reifying groups. In his analyses of nationalism, however, Allport clearly expressed his belief that the danger of employing collective concepts extended far beyond their vagueness as scientific concepts. For Allport, the dissolution of collective fictions and the fostering of scientific spirit in the individual were absolutely necessary for the proper functioning of a democratic nation.

Redefining the Role of the Individual in a World at War

Allport's strong concerns regarding the problems and perils of nationalistic appeals were accompanied by his understanding that the country required citizen support, sacrifice, and obedience during a conflict of such great magnitude. For Allport, the usual methods of bolstering

morale through propaganda campaigns and calls to patriotism were simply not acceptable. He

pointed directly to the kind of morale work being done by psychologists in partnership with the

National Research Council (including his brother Gordon) and noted that such morale-building

was not in line with democratic principles.[60] The only democratic method of bolstering morale

was to provide "clear statements" of the purposes of the war and to identify exactly what actions

could be taken to fulfill those purposes (Allport, 1941). Citizens could then make their own

informed decisions regarding support and participation. He therefore began to explore, test, and

promote individualistic approaches to securing such support. This included seeking out

opportunities to speak and write to the average citizen in an effort to expose the nationalistic

fallacy and stress the importance of clear, critical thinking.

In a 1940 article in the *Syracuse Daily Orange*, for example, Allport warned the Syracuse

community of the causes and consequences of war and encouraged them to become active

citizens in a participatory democracy. He outlined the irrational nature of war, attributing the

conflict to the increasing complexity of society. As more societal structures are created, more

needed to be maintained. These various structures become interdependent and threats against any

one of them therefore loom large as threats against the entire system. Maintenance of any one

system, therefore, becomes of primary importance and war is deemed necessary to protect

against threats to the system. For Allport, the result was a decreased focus on individual welfare:

the protection of social institutions becomes of greater importance than the protection of

individual citizens. Once war is deemed necessary for the "societal good," propaganda convinces

individuals that they must support and protect "the Nation," not recognizing it as a fictitious

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[60] There is some evidence that Floyd disapproved of Gordon's morale work. In a 1941 letter from Richard Schanck to Daniel Katz (both former students of Floyd), Schanck writes about Floyd "He told me that Murphy, his (Allport's) brother, etc. were overcome with War hysteria. He actually seemed to be embarrassed by his brother's being on the psychologists' committee to bolster up 'National Morale.'" (Schanck, 1941).

entity. The result is nationalistic feeling: "they rush to the support of the system with the feeling that they are defending everything they hold dear. This is a tragic confusion of values" (1940a). In the years leading up to the war, Allport was also working on a book that he hoped would help guide citizens toward rational, critical thought and expose for them the problems of collectivist thinking (Allport, 1937).[61] The book, *Psychological Pathways to Peace: Primer for Understanding the War- and Peace-Producing Behaviors of Individual Citizens*, was intended to draw attention to the part played by the individual in national affairs. Allport aimed to provide the average citizen with "exercises by which he is asked to clarify his own thinking on national and international questions from a standpoint of pure logic" (Allport, 1937b). For Allport, the instigation and maintenance of war could be clearly traced back to collectivist thought and behavior.

Allport argued that use of collective fictions in attempts to bolster morale not only hampered individual critical thought; they also induced citizen complacency, resulting in reduced citizen morale. In a newspaper article, he argued that when politicians and newspaper editors talk about the public as "some great impersonal Being," and describe the war effort in terms of nations and groups, individual citizens become confused about their own role in the war effort. Instead, the role of citizens should be emphasized by using words such as "you, we, us" and "our men" (Allport, 1942). Allport applied this principle in what was one of his most unique and curious wartime projects intended to reinstate individual initiative into the war effort Allport and his students initiated a letter-writing campaign, which he dubbed the "War-Winning Words" project (Allport, n.d.,"War-winning words"). Over six-hundred handwritten letters were composed, in which the author reminded civilians that the war was directly related to their day-to-day activities. The letter was addressed "Dear Friend" and the contents stressed the notion

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[61] The book is described in a memorandum, but it does not appear that it was ever completed.

that the war was something that must be fought *by* individuals *for* individuals. The letter stated, "This is your war, yours and mine. We must win it. How will it be won? By fighting, by bullets, bombs and tanks, by money—yes. But to get all these things in the strength we need them, we must have words also—the right kind of words." The recipient was then asked to speak to three individuals regarding wartime participation. Specifically, they were asked to tell the next individual in line "how you feel about this war, how it is your responsibility and his Will you, in your own manner inspire him or her to join with you in working, saving, and sacrificing, in redoubling your efforts for the great task which lies ahead?" The recipient was then told to keep this "chain of morale" intact by asking those three people to pass the same message on to three more with the same instructions. The respondent was assured of the effectiveness of this effort, with the letter pointing out that if twelve persons were to participate in this manner, over one million Americans would have their "energies aroused." The recipient was then informed to return a signed slip if they were willing to participate, presumably so that Allport could track the effectiveness of his campaign. This direct appeal, Allport believed, was much more effective for garnering civilian support for the war than vague and meaningless statements regarding society, the nation, and patriotism.[62]

Allport's attempts to foster the scientific spirit in the average citizen can also be seen in his work on behalf of The Rumor Clinic, a weekly newspaper column operated by Allport and his students to debunk common rumors in the Syracuse area. The Syracuse Clinic was part of a larger effort instigated by Gordon Allport at Harvard and the set-up, direction, and activities of these clinics was modeled on the initial *Boston Herald* clinic run by Gordon and his students (Faye, 2007). Nonetheless, Floyd Allport saw his own clinic as a method of exposing collective fictions and teaching citizens how to avoid them. For Allport, rumors represented another aspect

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[62] The archival record contains no further mentions of this project and its impact is therefore unknown.

of the war in which collective fictions dampened morale while the scientific spirit would help to foster it. In a 1943 column, Allport warned citizens that the use of a collective concept is one of the best indicators that one is hearing a rumor rather than a fact:

> One of the 'spooks' in our mind, which makes us fall a victim to the rumor-monger is likely materialize when some intent or action is attributed to a group, a class, or a nation of people. The fiction is often created that such a group or nation is a kind of Being in itself, apart from, or above, the individuals who compose it (Allport, 1943a)

Allport then went on to analyze how such collective concepts could be used by Axis agents to undermine morale and drive wedges between Allied nations. Allport advised citizens to analyze these collective concepts for themselves, to remain skeptical of such fallacies and—as Allport explained in a column the following week—keep his or her eyes completely on "the road ahead" (Allport, 1943b).

Democracy in the Laboratory: Allport's Wartime Research

Allport's popular and polemical writings and discussions of the dynamics of war and nationalism continued throughout the war years. Popular outlets provided a convenient and far-reaching platform for academics discussing democracy during this time, but as Allport himself noted, it was difficult to bring these kinds of ideas into laboratory. As he noted in 1942 in a paper coauthored with one of his students, "the virtues of democracy…being in the realm of the implicit, cannot be agreed upon between ourselves and our enemies. They cannot be tested and confirmed, at least for the moment, by reference to objective, material facts" (Mathes & Allport, 1942, p. 35). Throughout his career, Allport had made a clear distinction between pure and applied science, arguing for the need for scientific objectivity, completely divorced from one's personal opinions. In a 1928 article titled "Social Psychology and Human Values," Allport

(1928a) had noted that while it was difficult to separate one's own beliefs from one's science, it was completely possible and completely necessary. In this article, he discussed his own ability to do this, even in reference to his own children and in the midst of international upheaval:

> As a social psychologist, I thrust to one side the strong emotional appeal of my country's symbols and my patriotic impulse to obey the "will of my country." I cease to be interested in psychology as a means of making my children loyal and patriotic. I am concerned only with finding out just how and why my children have acquired their interest in warfare and their hatred of Germans. When in such a mood certain significant and guiding questions come to my mind, questions which are very different from those asked by the defenders of national morale (Allport, 1928a, p. 377)

Allport also pointed out that the social psychologist, being capable of such detachment, is in a position to expose biases and act as a "countercheck" or "antidote" to war hysteria (p. 384). He believed that such disinterested social psychology had immense potential for predicting, controlling, and changing the social world. The disinterested science, however, had to precede evaluations of society and attempts to change it.

During the 1940s, Allport indeed attempted to adopt this objective approach to the issues of greatest interest during the war. His wartime laboratory was focused on a variety of issues including civilian participation in the war effort, the effectiveness of propaganda, the effects of newspaper stories and headlines, and other issues exploring civilian thought and behavior in relation to the war. Although Allport himself seldom drew connections between his empirical, laboratory-based work and his popular writings, the two were very consonant. The majority of this wartime research was directed at examining and testing—or perhaps demonstrating—the ideas he espoused in his popular work, including the errors of collective thinking, the importance

of rational thinking, the dangers of nationalism, and the importance of individual agency. Much of the research conducted by Allport and his students at this time was done under the aegis of the Syracuse University Morale Seminar, another effort spearheaded by Gordon Allport at Harvard (Faye, 2011). The Syracuse seminar was one of several devoted to examining civilian morale in the context of the war (Allport, n.d., *Memoranda*). Through the seminar, Allport and his students would carry out research on wartime issues and then write up memoranda and briefs on the findings to distribute to government agencies and news outlets.

One such study, conducted with Gertrude Hanchett on citizen support for the war, Allport attempted to construct a scale of "war-producing behavior" which would measure citizens' willingness to perform certain activities that help to support, produce, or advance war efforts (Allport & Hanchett, 1940). Participants were asked to imagine a situation—for example, a foreign threat to seize land in the United States—and then indicate their willingness to engage in activities (providing financial support, signing a petition) that would produce war if such a situation arose. Allport and Hanchett's method was in fact quite unique at a time when attitude scales and public opinion polls frequently gauged people's feelings or sentiments towards national policies or social issues. The difference was intentional; for Allport, such scales and polls were rooted in a "third-personized approach" (Allport & Hanchett, 1940, p. 448), where citizens are asked to think about fictional collective concepts such as the "nation" and "national policies." For Allport, this kind of measurement failed to cast the individual as "an effective, dynamic agent" (p. 449) who is capable of acting to impede or further war efforts. In his justification for this new kind of scale focused on individual behavior, Allport stressed the opportunities for expressing individual agency even in an increasingly complicated society focused on national policy: "[the individual] can, for example, agitate others in conversation to

'move the powers that be,' he can write letters or sign petitions to his Congressman, or he can march in a parade" (pp. 449-450). The scale measured these kinds of activities and the results suggested that the relationship between how individuals feel about national war policies and what they are willing to do in support of such policies was in fact quite small. In short, the research was constructed on the basis of (and supported) many of Allport's long-held scientific and personal beliefs regarding the primacy of individual behavior, the importance of individual agency, and the erroneous use and interpretation of collective concepts.

Allport and Hanchett's work on war-producing behaviors was a response to the increasingly popular public opinion polling methods. In a 1940 article, Allport had argued that public opinion, particularly during wartime, should serve as a platform for individual self-expression regarding governmental activities. The process of public opinion polling had become "third-personized;" individuals were not asked about what they wanted for their country but were instead asked to indicate their opinion on what those in power wanted for the country. For Allport, this was exemplified by the dichotomous "for-or-against" nature of polling questions. As Allport (1940b) stated, "The question for them is not what possible alternatives there are, and how these fit in with the lay of the attitudes of the citizens, but whether a particular plan in which they are interested can be put into operation. The finer shades of individual choices are thus concealed" (p. 254). Allport's work with Hanchett represents a clear attempt to create a new method of measurement that would omit collective fictions and provide room for gauging individual interests.

Allport's wartime laboratory work also addressed his concerns regarding the average citizen's ability and freedom to think rationally and critically. A 1942 study focused on radio propaganda essentially sought to test Allport's ideas regarding the importance of the "scientific

spirit" for the average citizen (Mathes & Allport, 1942). Allport and his graduate student Mary

Mathes had participants listen to radio propaganda and then measured acceptance of the message

arguments. Allport's main focus in the study, however, was the role of critical, rational thought

in acceptance of the arguments. They found that with some training, participants could be taught

to react either immediately and instinctually or critically and rationally. As he expected, those

that were trained to think critically were less likely to accept propaganda messages as being true.

For Allport, this was a clear argument that citizens should be trained to think critically and

should be given as much information as possible regarding the war. In confidential drafts sent to

various government agencies, he made precisely this argument, urging government officials to

provide citizens with facts and news regarding the war.

Several other studies were designed to test ideas regarding the impact of using collective

terms such as "nation" and "Japan" in appeals to citizens (Allport, 1945b), with Allport seeking

to test the idea that the use of such collective concepts actually undermined morale. This

hypothesis was not supported, but Allport continued to test them in a variety of ways. He also

devised—but did not find the funding to carry out—several studies along these lines. In a 1945

letter to Gordon, for example, he described a study in which citizens would be randomly divided

into two groups and each group would receive a description of the individual's role in the war

effort. In the first group, the description would consist of simplistic, stereotyped, and collectivist

terms for describing individual participation. In the second group, detailed charts and

demonstrations would describe exactly what individuals could do for the war effort and exactly

what the eventual outcome of the war would be. Morale and potential participation would then

be measured.[63] These planned studies and all of the others that were conducted by Allport and

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[63] Many of these studies were highly complicated and Allport's very detailed descriptions of them likely confounded his potential funding sources. In his letter to Gordon, Floyd notes that the SSRC refused to fund the study: "They not

his students during the War all seemed to have the same general purpose: to test the Allport's

theory that collective concepts damage morale and that fostering the scientific spirit boosts it.

The associations he made between democracy and the scientific spirit and collectivism and

totalitarianism also suggest that Allport was for all intents and purposes attempting to

empirically examine totalitarianism and democracy in the laboratory.

Beyond Nations: Allportian Individualism in the Post-War World

At the close of the Second World War, Allport's approach to the social remained strongly

individualistic and his focus on individual behavior continued to be a prominent part of his social

psychology. In fact, in some regards, his individualism was further strengthened by the war, as

he witnessed what he believed were the detrimental effects of propaganda, nationalism, public

opinion polls, and sensational journalism. His views at the end of the war are well-documented

in his correspondence with his brother Gordon, where the contrast between the two brothers and

their view of the individual is striking. Gordon believed that institutions could indeed have a

detrimental effect on individual autonomy, but he also held that institutions might serve as an

outlet for the realization of individual goals; that is, individuals may satisfy their own wants by

means of participation in social institutions. Floyd disagreed. Participation in social groupings

such as institutions or nations might *begin* with an individual goal, but according to Floyd, such

participation always *ends* with a societal goal. In a 1945 letter to Gordon, he wrote:

> When we channel our activities through an institutional organization…we are committing
>
> ourselves to a choice of values which we cannot ultimately control as individuals. We
>
> have to keep the business out of the red, that is make profits, we have to get votes, we

only turned us down, but the director, Dr. Crane, said that he could not see very much of anything in the problem"
(Allport, 1945b).

have to keep the church running, etc. No other value can be placed ahead of these in case

a conflict should arise. (Allport, 1945b)

Allport believed that group life not only obliterates individual values, but also reduces individual

responsibility:

What this does to individual responsibility is clear. We simply lose control of our own

destinies and furthermore there seems to be little hope of improving the situation by

appeals intended to incite the individual to further and more loyal and complete

participation in his institution. Thus, patriotic fervor, church zeal, political party

enthusiasm, striving to improve one's business or business in general, all have this same

effect. They commit the individual without permitting him to assume or take

responsibility as an individual (Allport, 1945b)

These two ideas—the loss of individual freedom and the lack of individual thought, intention,

and initiative—were of major concern to Allport prior to the war and their importance for Allport

was further strengthened by the conflict. Group-level concepts, which he had once dismissed

rather facilely as being nonexistent and not scientifically denotable, were now examined as major

impediments to democracy.

Indeed these differences between Gordon and Floyd extended beyond this discussion of

individuals and institutions in a democracy at war and contrasting the views of the Allport

brothers sheds light on Floyd's conceptualization of individuality, particularly in the years during

and after World War II. Though the two brothers had worked together over the years, and though

Floyd had attempted to guide Gordon through his undergraduate and graduate schooling, their

views of the person began to diverge significantly as they moved through their careers. As

Nicholson (2000, 2003) has shown, Gordon turned to a view of personality and the individual

that embraced the uniqueness of each individual and the ways in which the traits of each individual are patterned or connected. Such a form of individuality could not be captured by the methods of natural science. Floyd, on the other hand, adopted a view of the individual as defined in relation to established norms; that is, the individual is defined by how much he or she differs from or is similar to others, as determined by psychometric measures. While Gordon focused on the distinctiveness of each individual, Floyd focused on the general responses of individuals to social objects and persons and the ways in which these responses diverged from the norm. For Floyd, providing a scientific examination of the individual by documenting these norms would provide a method of laying bare the ways in which the person was being subsumed by the agents of mass culture and social control, including advertising, institutions, corporations, governments and the like. In essence, Floyd's view of the individual and his devotion to science were coupled with a science of the person that focused on displaying the very sameness of all human beings in 1920s urban America. Displaying this conformity might help to dissolve it. Gordon's view, however, led him to a science of person that focused on agency and purpose, highlighted the inestimable difference and uniqueness of individuals, and promoted the cultivation of that difference. The divergent views of individuality adopted by Gordon and Floyd provide an interesting view of two different methodological, moral, and ontological spectrums for viewing the person.

For Allport, this view of the individual was clearly strengthened during the war years, but it was also complicated to some extent by his social milieu. By the 1930s, Allport's outlook on the social had already expanded considerably, moving from his examinations of inter-individual contact in social facilitation experiments to his analysis of social norms and social institutions by means of the J-curve. The J-curve had demonstrated to Allport that one could detect patterns in

social behavior, patterns that perhaps applied across a variety of situations and contexts. Such

patterns could perhaps be used to map larger and larger segments of the social. One could

imagine, for example, an individual's social life mapped out in accordance with the J-curve

hypothesis, where the individual's participation in a variety of social institutions could be

delineated. Such an approach might also be applied to an institution, where each purpose of the

institution could be discerned and individual fulfillment of those purposes could be mapped.

Such an approach to the social built on Allport's early study of social behavior, but it shows a

clear change in his thoughts regarding the complexity of the social and the kinds of approaches

required for its study.

By the 1940s, however, it became increasingly clear to Allport that the J-curve approach

was not adequate for dealing with the complexities of the social—a world that now included not

just face-to-face interactions, small social groups, or American institutions. It had become clear

that the social was in fact global. In the closing years of the war, Allport therefore began to make

more and more references to the need for a systematic understanding of collective action. In an

undated memorandum titled "World Structure and the Origin of Modern Wars" he wrote:

> If the world were a place where every man could live within himself, if it were a planet of
>
> perpetually small population and pioneering activity, this question [of understanding
>
> collective action] would never arise. But we have reached the condition in which these
>
> great national and economic structures, which make up our present chaotic world, must
>
> be understood. Their laws must be studied if we are to survive, for human life is
>
> organized unalterably in this matrix (Allport, n.d., *World Structure*)

Allport's calls for an understanding of collective action were directly linked to his belief that

democracy had become contradictory during the war: individual freedoms and liberties were

suppressed in order to protect the nation. As he wrote in an unpublished manuscript in 1941: "we have lost the individual liberties of our tradition…If we try to employ democracy as our rallying cry, we are shocked to find that one-half of its assumptions now contradict the other half" (Allport, 1941). Allport seemed to accept that the situation was necessary, but believed that it also meant that the entire foundation of American democracy required a serious rethinking. A true evaluation of democracy and the social order, he believed, required an entirely novel approach to understanding the social. The war years, rife with debate regarding the structure and function of social institutions, had complicated Allport's simplistic approach and, in the remaining thirty years of his life, he would never again return to a staunch form of individualism: methodological, moral, or otherwise.

Chapter 6

The Master Problem of Social Psychology: Allport's Turn to Theory, 1945-1978

In 1955, at the age of 65 and just months away from official retirement from Syracuse, Floyd Allport (1955) published his first book-length work since the 1930s. This monograph— *Theories of Perception and the Concept of Structure*—would not be nearly as popular as his *Social Psychology,* but it received rave reviews from his colleagues and friends and the publishing house quickly received requests for nearly 6,000 copies (Neilly,1955). *Theories of Perception*, like many of Allport's later writing projects, had begun as a nearly impossible task: he sought to review every single leading theory in psychology, searching for any that might solve the problem of explaining psychological data systematically without resorting to metaphysics or vitalism. He eventually resolved to limit his review to contemporary theories of perception, including Gestalt theory, Lewinian field theory, and Donald Hebb's associationism. The book, which Allport viewed as preparation for writing the most important monograph of his career, would in fact turn out to be his last.

Theories of Perception reveals much about Allport's approach to science as a whole in the period following World War II and sheds light on this time as one of transition for him, particularly in regards to his ideas regarding the individual and the social. Allport's earliest work on social facilitation, personality, attitudes, and even the J-curve hypothesis was minimally reliant on theory; for the most part, Allport had focused primarily on gathering concrete data, summarizing findings from other laboratory experiments, and uncovering lawful relationships. In the post-War period, however, his focus turned increasingly to theory and the important role it played in advancing science. For Allport, data and the establishment of quantifiable laws were still important, but they were meaningless without theory: "Good theories give us deeper

understandings. They can suddenly change our entire outlook not merely upon this law or that, but upon a whole range of facts or laws" (p. 4). Allport went on to describe the common thought processes behind great theories and the role such theories played in science:

> For the most part they grew out of deep intellectual perplexities or 'theoretical crises,' and they often provided solutions that seemed to resolve apparent contradictions in nature. Though a background of observation lay behind them, they were the results of the attempt without further experiment at the moment, merely by thinking about what was already known, to put together the pieces of a puzzle that might reveal an order in nature never before envisaged" (Allport, 1955, p. 5)

This passage, presented as an objective analysis of the role of theory in science, in fact aptly describes Allport's own abandonment of experimentation in the post-War period and his turn toward theory development. Indeed, from the 1950s until the end of his life, Allport—considered by many to be the founder of experimental social psychology—would not conduct another study or experiment; instead, he increasingly withdrew from the laboratory and from academic circles more generally in order to devote his time to the construction of a grand psychological theory. Though his methods and approach shifted significantly during this period, his area of focus remained the same: it was in this last period of his life that Allport took the problem of the individual and the social out of the laboratory and subjected it to theoretical analysis.

Social Psychology in the Post-War World

The years following the Second World War were significant ones for the social sciences, characterized by changes in subject matter, funding sources, public visibility, size, and organization. Social psychology was no exception, and some scholars have suggested that it was in the post-war period that the discipline truly found a footing as a sub discipline of psychology.

Indeed, some scholars have described this period as the "golden age" of social psychology

(House, 2008; Sewell, 1989), characterized by interdisciplinary teams of researchers working on

socially relevant issues with substantial federal support (House, 2008). It was a period in which

many of the classic and well-known studies were done, including Leon Festinger's (1957) work

on cognitive dissonance, Solomon Asch's (1951) conformity research, and Stanley Milgram's

(1963) work on obedience to authority. These years were productive ones, as demonstrated by

the sheer number of studies conducted, the growth in methodological approaches, and the

amount of data collected (Cartwright, 1979). The field also began to acquire the markings of an

established discipline in the post-War period, including the founding of the Society for

Experimental Social Psychology in 1965 and, in that same year, the founding of two journals: the

Journal of Personality and Social Psychology and the *Journal of Experimental Social*

Psychology.[64]

In addition to contributing to the growth and professionalization of the field, the war

years also seem to have affected the subject matter and general orientation of social psychology.

The social climate of the Depression and the Second World War, characterized by social,

political, and economic turmoil, spawned what one author has described as "a very groupy social

psychology" (Steiner, 1974, p. 105). Steiner differentiated between individualistically-oriented

scholars and group-oriented scholars, noting that the former treated the organism as a self-

contained unit, affecting and affected by inner states and external stimuli. Group-oriented

scholars of the post-war period, however, viewed the individual as part of a larger system:

> The individual is presumed to be an element in a larger system, a group, organization, or
>
> society. And what he does is presumed to reflect the state of the larger system and the

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[64] Though other journals examining social-psychological topics existed, none purported to be devoted entirely to social psychology as an independent science.

events that are occurring in it. Consequently, one looks for causes that are located outside

the individual himself, in the collective actions of others, or in the constraints imposed by

the larger system" (p. 96).

While many human scientists continued to focus on internal processes—including everything

from attitudes and ego-involvement to biological processes—a growing contingent began to

focus on social systems and the place of individuals within them. Steiner suggests that in the

1940s, both of these viewpoints were developing congenially alongside one another and it

seemed as though social psychology may indeed have been taking a position as a much-needed

bridge between psychology and the social sciences: "It would connect the proximal with the

distal, the internal with the external, and the monadic with the dyadic" (p. 98).[65]

This postwar focus on groups is indeed evident in the social psychology of the 1940s and

1950s and the focus was accompanied by a move toward interdisciplinary research efforts. Kurt

Lewin's work on the social psychology of small groups serves as an apt example of this kind of

work and of the growing attention being paid to group-level concepts in the post-war period. For

Lewin, understanding groups was necessary for the safeguarding of democracy and for the

prevention of everything from small group conflict to international war. His Research Center for

Group Dynamics, established at MIT in 1945, was intended for just this purpose. Lewin worked

to bring together an interdisciplinary group of scholars that could explore group dynamics from a

multitude of angles (Lewin, 1945). Other interdisciplinary scholarly efforts focused on similar

topics were also developed during and after the war. Harvard's Department of Social Relations,

for example, was established to bring together social, cultural, and psychological sciences

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[65] Steiner notes that this group-oriented contingent all but disappeared in the late 1950s, but it represented a strong
trend in the post-war period. The group-oriented approach waned only as society became more tranquil during the
Eisenhower administration and understanding groups or factions seemed less pressing than it had in earlier decades
(McGuire, 1969, 1976; Steiner, 1974).

(Allport & Boring, 1946). In the announcement of the interdisciplinary Department, it was noted that "World War II greatly accelerated the fusion of research activities in this common territory, and virtually obliterated distinctions that were already breaking down" (Harvard University, 1946 as cited in Smith, 1998, p. 46). Interdisciplinary training programs like these were set up in multiple academic institutions, including Michigan, Yale, Cornell, and Berkeley. Interdisciplinary research programs were also established by government-run funding agencies, private foundations, and the military (Sewell, 1989).

However, this focus on group dynamics and the flourish of interdisciplinary efforts did not make the problem of the group less difficult for social and behavioral scientists, who continued to struggle with studying this complicated concept within the constraints of empirical science. As Lewin explained in 1945, group dynamics represented an important but extremely complicated subject matter:

> On whatever unit of group life we focus: whether we think of nations and international politics; of economic life within a nation and the relation between business groups or between producer and consumer; of race or religious groups and of their relations in the community; of the factory and the relations between top management, the foreman and the worker—at whatever unit we look, we find a complicated network of problems and conflicting interests. Their degree of complication seems to be rivaled only by our lack of clarity about the true nature of the problems (Lewin, 1945, p. 128).

There was indeed a sense at the close of the 1940s that group-level concepts had to be addressed in the post-War world and that addressing such concepts might require a novel approach to the field. There was also a growing sense that this new approach would necessarily be more theoretical, since the plethora of empirical findings produced during the War remained

disconnected and not well explained. As Robert Sears noted in his 1950 APA presidential address on personality and social behavior research, "empirical progress has been accompanied by the construction of but a minimal amount of theory" (p. 476). He was careful to note that a good theory for social psychology would necessarily include both individual and group level variables, since the two "are so inextricably intertwined, both as to cause and effect" (Sears, 1951, p. 476). Sears urged scholars to design systematic, multivariable theoretical frameworks that could be used to predict events in the social world.

As social psychologists continued to navigate their way through the postwar years, they also faced serious internal and external questioning of their field and particularly its ability to produce relevant, useable knowledge. The turbulent social changes and unrest that characterized the United States in the 1960s and 1970s had significant effects on the human sciences, including social psychology. Social psychologists, who perhaps should have had the most to contribute to an understanding of the social and political upheavals of the 1960s seemed poorly equipped to do so (Faye, 2012). Criticism of the discipline, its orientation, and its methods came from the government, funding agencies, other academics, the student protest movement, and from social psychologists themselves. By the late 1960s, the field was facing an internally diagnosed crisis and the pressure to develop a social psychology that could more adequately conceptualize the complexities of the social world was acutely felt within the field (Faye, 2012).

<div align="center">The Turn Towards Systems Theories</div>

Social psychology's postwar focus on theoretical development, interdisciplinarity, and multivariable social systems reflected the discipline's sense of urgency when it came to understanding large-scale group phenomena. It also reflected larger concerns in the academic world regarding the integration of knowledge and the sciences. Across disciplines, scholars were

searching for ways to integrate subject matter and to combine multiple variables and multiple levels of analysis into more systematic, general theoretical frameworks. In 1956, Kenneth Boulding—an economist at the University of Michigan—warned of the dangers of academic specialization in all fields, including the social sciences, and called for "a body of systematic theoretical constructs which will discuss the general relationships of the empirical world" (Boulding, 1956, p. 197). He noted that each discipline had set about studying its own "individual," whether that be a person, a molecule, or a corporation. The difficulty that arose, however, was that each of these "individuals" interacted with one another, formed a part of one another, and were inextricably interrelated. Boulding argued that rather than reducing each level of existence to the one below for explanation—as had been the most common scientific approach in the early decades of the twentieth century—scholars needed to look at each level of existence as a system that interacts with other systems.

Boulding and others were very much following the work of biologist and philosopher Ludwig von Bertalanffy, who had critiqued modern laboratory work for its focus on the reduction of complex phenomena. This reductionism, he argued, resulted from a longstanding but unfounded fear of referring to "wholes," since they were considered to be "metaphysical notions transcending the boundaries of science" (Bertalanffy, 1972, p. 415). Though Bertalanffy had been promoting the study of organized systems in biology since the 1920s, it was not until the 1950s that a broad array of fields and disciplines really began to pay attention to the approach; by the 1950s, general system theory (GST) had begun to spread across the academic landscape (Bertalanffy, 1972; Boulding, 1956). General system theory provided a new way of looking at groups or wholes, one that sought to include a broad array of phenomena and a diverse group of entities usually studied only by individual disciplines. Psychologists, whose

behavioristic approach was the target of much of the criticism launched by GST proponents like Boulding (Boulding, 1956), paid attention to GST. It was during this period that the phrase "behavioral sciences" was coined by a group of scholars seeking to develop a general theory of behavior that would be applicable to social as well as biological sciences (Miller, 1955). It was also during this period that hybrid disciplines involving the behavioral sciences (e.g., cybernetics and organization theory) began to emerge (Boulding, 1956).[66]

The variety of systems theories that began to emerge in the 1950s were characterized by a significant change in approaches to science and theory. Using a systems approach, studying a phenomenon meant reducing it to its dynamics rather than its components, as had been the most dominant approach in twentieth-century science (Laszlo & Krippner, 1998). In making this shift, systems theorists were focused on larger patterns of behavior in a system rather than on how individual components behave. This shift seemed to provide a way of grasping large-scale, complex phenomena that could not be captured through examinations of simple functional relationships between a small number of variables. Rather than discerning how small changes in one variable create change in another, systems theorists were attempting to capture how many elements in a system affect one another and affect the functioning of the whole system. The emphasis here was always on the dynamics of systems, which was comprised of the interaction between elements and subsystems or suprasystems.

As one author noted, systems theory seemed to provide a significant advance over classic mechanistic approaches which viewed individual elements as reactive rather than interactive; the mechanistic approach "had nothing to say of growth, evolution, or purpose; all they offered was

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[66] As Mark Solovey (2013) has noted, the rise of systems theory and the postwar focus on interdisciplinarity and theory building were directly linked to the vision promoted by the Ford Foundation which "posited a universal scientific methodology and epistemology, embraced a natural-scientific model of inquiry, favored interdisciplinary studies, and underscored the need to develop the field's basic resources" (p. 118).

static equilibrium" (Thayer, 1972). Furthermore, it seemed as though the mechanistic approach could not contribute significantly to an understanding of the kinds of complex problems faced by scientists from all fields in the mid-twentieth century:

> In the 1950s, with the introduction of computers, hydrogen bombs and space exploration, large-scale problems began to penetrate Western society. The traffic-system breakdowns, environmental disasters, and the nuclear threat were immediately high on the agenda. Society was faced with *messes*, interacting problems varying from technical and organizational to social and political (Skyttner, 2005, p. 36).

Systems theories seemed to provide new footing for scientists seeking to understand complex wholes, without resorting to the descriptive kinds of holism that had previously been proposed. Furthermore, it seemed to provide a way of approaching living systems without employing mechanistic or vitalistic thinking while still linking the social sciences with the natural sciences (Voigt, 2011). While this approach was far removed from classic mechanism, it would still be very palatable for a methodological individualist; as Langlois (1983) notes, "The parts are conceived of as logically distinct elements of a mathematical set; those elements exist and are fully defined independently of any relations that might be specified. A system is just the set of parts plus a set of relations among the parts" (p. 585). Furthermore, systems approaches had a normative aspect, focused on delineating existing systems with the idea of eventually creating new systems that function more efficiently (Skyttner, 2005). As Thayer (1972) noted, "few concepts ever bust on the intellectual scene with so much promise as General System(s) Theory" (p. 481). Indeed, systems theories seemed to provide an innovative new path for scientists struggling to conceptualize a complex world. It is understandable that such an approach would be of interest to social psychologists who had, since the inception of their field, struggled with

the conceptualization of an important, but seemingly undefinable part-whole relationship—that of the individual and society.

Beyond Individualism: Allport and the Concept of Collectivity in the Post-War World

Perhaps more than any other social psychologist of the time, Floyd Allport was paying close attention to the growing literature on systems theory and other approaches that moved away from reductionism and aimed to create a new conceptualization of "wholes" through integration of the subject matter of the separate sciences into a larger theoretical structure. As his wartime projects began to wind down, he returned to the problem that had been central to him since graduate school: the problem of the individual and the social. His earliest approach to the problem—as reflected in his dissertation work on social facilitation—had been rooted in a simple and straightforward, mechanistic, and behaviorist approach of observing and manipulating inter-individual stimulation and response. It became clear to Allport, however, that such an approach, rooted in classical reductionist thinking, failed to account adequately for the impact of social factors on the behavior of the individual. Perhaps even more so, he became aware of his failure to explain the nature of the social and the specific ways in which it related to the individual. His recognition of the simplicity of his earlier approach is evident in a 1947 memorandum to the Dean of the Graduate School at Syracuse, where he explained his growing understanding that he could not facilely dismiss collective concepts. Referring to his earlier work, he wrote, "the question I had not fairly asked was 'just what are institutions if they are not super-individuals?'" (Allport, 1947). This altered outlook was due in part to Allport's developing idea that individuals, like collectivities, were not in fact singular scientific entities either: "I have come to believe that both the 'individual' and the 'institutions' are loose terms which need replacing if

we are to work toward a fuller understanding." He had come to believe that like the "group," the individual was essentially fictional, comprised of parts and processes.

This recognition was further complicated by Allport's growing understanding of the difficulty of studying the individual and the social. In a document dated 1948, Allport wrote out his thoughts on this issue, grappling with the idea that studying the lone individual in an attempt to understand social behavior meant relying on the faulty assumption that social and individual behavior are separate or can be logically separated. "The lone individual" he noted "is very difficult to find" (Allport, 1948). On the other hand, he continued to hold that the social group was not a scientific object that could be directly experienced. He therefore saw a central difficulty for the scientific social psychologist: while the social group is not a scientific object, the individual is not a social object. He writes,

> So we are in a dilemma. The lone individual, if we could find him, is denotable, but if we study only him we do not find the data of interactions of individuals (social psychology)…He behaves differently in groups than when alone. If we take the group on the other hand as an object of study, we find that it is not denotable and fails to meet scientific requirements. We now see the need of…arriving at a method which is both scientifically sound and capable of dealing with the phenomena of inter-individual action which we want to study" (Allport, 1948)

The social psychologist was therefore left with no clear-cut or satisfactory method for studying inter-individual action. Allport's earlier views, rooted in the reduction of the social to the individual and the study of the social through the study of the individual no longer seemed tenable. This quandary very much resembles the kind of "theoretical crisis" or "intellectual

perplexity" that he would describe a few years later in *Theories of Perception* and it was this

theoretical problem that would guide his future work.

In his attempt to work toward a new approach to the field, Allport continued to avoid

commonly used phrases such as "group action" or "group behavior" and he continued to insist on

the abandonment of group-level concepts. Nonetheless, he emphasized the importance of

understanding "concerted action" and suggested that this problem continued to be in fact the

most important problem for the field of social psychology: "There is need in social psychology

and the social sciences for a better understanding of what takes place when a number of people

act together so that a definite end result is produced" (Allport, 1940). Allport also began to see

social psychology as being somewhat disjointed, amassing facts about social behavior without

having adequate theoretical structures to account for these facts. As he later recalled, he therefore

began contemplating the idea that "nearly all this large, and at present somewhat formless, mass

of findings that constitutes current social psychology is capable of being subsumed under a

single more general formulation" (Allport, 1974, p. 8). Referencing the work of general systems

theorists, he noted that such work would be complicated and highly interdisciplinary:

> Such a theory would of course have to embrace not only facts of the social and
>
> psychological disciplines, but would have to reach down into the biological, biochemical,
>
> and even physical levels. It must seem presumptuous and foolhardy indeed for any one
>
> person to undertake so vast a problem, let alone a psychologist who had no particular
>
> competence in some of the disciplines involved. Nevertheless, that is the course to which
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> I set myself (Allport, 1974, p. 18).

In the 1940s, Allport began turning to other sub-disciplines of psychology and other sciences for

new ways of conceptualizing concerted action. This led him to a diverse body of literature on

interdisciplinary, systematic approaches to behavior, action, function and systematic change in all fields of study. His reading list included articles on a variety of topics such as emergent evolution, new conceptualizations of the organism, relationships between physiology and other sciences, ecological approaches to behavior, and the statics and dynamics of populations[67]. He would then spend his remaining years at Syracuse, and in fact the remainder of his life, slowly and cautiously wading through this literature and attempting to build an elaborate theoretical framework for rethinking the group and conceptualizing collective action.

<div align="center">Event-Structure Theory</div>

Allport's work on collective action was very different from his earliest work on social facilitation, but it was not entirely divorced from his graduate training. In fact, this later theoretical work shows direct ties to the philosophical work of his Harvard mentors. In many ways, Allport's attempts to create a theoretical conceptualization of individual and collective action fit very well with the arguments made by his main early mentor E. B. Holt at the beginning of the twentieth century. In defining and defending New Realism, Holt (1915a) had argued for a study of behavior that moved beyond reflex action and beyond physiological descriptions of behavior. Holt argued that reducing behavior to physiological parts and processes results in a lack of attention to the "state of interdependence" (p. 155) that arises in cases of cooperative action. He noted that relying on reductionism and the "bead theory" of causation proved problematic for the natural sciences as well and had resulted in a move toward more focus on functions of entities, a search for laws, and an examination of how objects behave in relation to other objects. Holt urged his colleagues who were "addicted to bead theory" to "put our microscope back into its case" and focus less on identifying first causes in behavior and

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[67] Box 8 of the Floyd Allport papers contains folders of Allport's reprints from this period. The publications themselves range from the 1930s up to the 1960s.

instead ask the "only pertinent, scientific question: *What* is this organism *doing*?" (p. 161). This would require viewing the organism in a larger system and paying attention to purpose or direction of behavior through neutral observation of behavioral patterns. Such an approach differed significantly from early twentieth century experimental work that sought to uncover small, simple, repeatable laws of stimulus-response behavior and search for their physiological substrates.

Holt's call for the description and observation of behavior and its relationship to the purpose of the organism was very similar to what Allport had begun approaching with his work on the J-curve and conformity behaviors. In these studies, Allport observed individual behavior patterns and plotted them according to the extent to which they fulfilled a particular institutional purpose, looking for patterns in such behaviors. As he moved away from the J-curve studies towards his theoretical work, his outlook continued to mimic that of Holt and the New Realists, as he sought to develop a new theoretical approach for social and psychological phenomena. Allport argued that the common scientific focus on "temporal trains of cause and effect" frequently masked the very phenomena they were trying to explain (Allport, 1954, p. 287). In what represents a significant shift from his early approach, he suggested that the focus on laws had led to a dead end: "the molar laws of covarying behavioral quantities have about reached the end of their tether…Some broader theoretical outlook is required" (p. 281). Allport illustrated this point, employing the example of a boy taking a drink of lemonade. Without first revealing the act he was describing, Allport depicted it in terms of quantitative, physiological laws such as evaporation, increases in sensation, and neural transmission. He then described the same act again, this time as a series of simple events such as the experience of thirst, the lifting of a glass, and drinking. Allport employed this rather extreme example to demonstrate that the behavior

itself is unrecognizable when described using conventional, quantitative laws. He suggested that if such laws could not even sufficiently describe a behavior, it was highly unlikely that they could explain it. What was wanted, he argued, was a description of the events that take place in such an act and the order in which they occur—or, as Allport called it, an outline of the patterns and dynamics of behavior.

Allport's new approach to understanding behavior was, in this respect, drastically different from his earliest work; reductionist, quantitative renderings of behavior were no longer the *sin qua non* of good social-psychological science. His new system gave precedence to qualitative laws, theoretical renderings, and simple observations of behavior. Allport argued that while behavior is indeed governed by quantitative laws, it is governed by structural laws as well. These structural laws or principles, he argued, might in fact be found not just in human behavior, but throughout all of nature more generally. Allport therefore began to promote an approach to science that would seek the structure of phenomena as diverse as a boy drinking lemonade, a factory producing steel, or the actions of the nervous system. Such an approach required viewing phenomena as belonging to "a system of events or happenings between explicitly denotable things" (Allport, 1940, p. 418). When such systems are uncovered, prediction and control become possible. As he explained in 1940, "Unless a collective situation is looked at as a system…its variables cannot be sufficiently controlled to secure workably adequate prediction in terms of one variable" (p. 418).

Allport named this approach *event-structure theory*.[68] The social world, he argued, could be fruitfully conceptualized as a system of events, or rather, as several event systems that are interrelated to make up a larger social system. A factory, for example, is one event system made

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[68] As the theory grew and changed, Allport gave it a variety of names. The ones most frequently used in the 1950s were *event-systems theory* and *event-structure theory*.

up of individual sub-systems such as the production of metal plates, the selling of such plates, and the purchase of supplies. Each of these sub-systems is made up of *nodes* and *events*. For example, the creation of the metal plates involves individual people (nodes) making particular things happen (events). Allport believed all event-systems were circular, beginning in a state of inactivity, moving toward activity, and eventually returning to a state of inactivity or equilibrium, operating much like the physiological concept of homeostasis. The system is driven by purpose, such that each event is geared at fulfilling a purpose. Allport believed that all of nature was filled with these systems, including biological, psychological, and social systems. Eventually, Allport would go on to assert that nature in its entirety could be conceptualized as a large system comprised of these interconnected subsystems, each operating by the same structural and dynamic rules and patterns. His previous reductionism of the social into the psychological and the psychological into the biological had, by the 1960s, been replaced by an attempt to find common patterns among these vast and interrelated systems (Allport, 1954).

Allport emphasized the necessity of describing these systems both qualitatively and quantitatively. Qualitatively, researchers needed to observe a system, figuring out where each node was in relation to other nodes and what events regularly occurred within a system. Systems could essentially be identified wherever one saw regularly occurring patterns of behavior. Laws of the system could also then be identified and described qualitatively. In addition, systems could be described quantitatively, though such description would require a very in-depth understanding of the system and its qualities. Allport suggested that systems involved energy and probability. Each node carries a certain amount of energy which is transferred around the system, used, and stored. Finding measures of this energy would allow theorists to measure potentialities for certain actions within the system. Though Allport himself never successfully reached the point of

quantitatively analyzing such systems, his archival notes are rich with lengthy formulas he devised and revised precisely for this purpose (Allport, 1954, 1955, 1967a).[69]

As the 1940s drew to a close, Allport began to pour all of his energy into this theoretical work, hopeful that by developing the laws of particular systems, he would work out a theoretical skeleton that applied to all systems at all levels of analysis. He was secretive about his work, publishing little and requiring his graduate students to agree "that they would keep the methodology reasonably confidential and not publish their findings" until he felt his own work on the theory was ready to be fully revealed. The work, however, became increasingly complicated as Allport pushed forward. He began to remove himself from academic circles in order to focus almost entirely on the manuscript. His work with graduate students ended in 1954 (Allport, 1956) and in 1956, he officially retired from Syracuse (Crawford, 1956) and moved to California. Though he did teach classes at Berkeley, he was focused on his theoretical work (Ghiselli, 1957). The work became larger and larger as more time passed. By 1951, he had planned a two-volume work on the theory. By 1952, he had decided to expand the manuscript to three volumes. This was due in part to the fact that Allport had become increasingly confident that the approach was not just a new way of conceptualizing social psychological phenomena, but rather it was a method that required an entirely new idea of reality. Allport's manuscript, tentatively titled *Structure in Nature*, was intended to outline the theory as it would apply in this broad manner.

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[69] For example, in a set of notes dated 1951, Allport (1951) wrote the following formula:
"Ex=Px+Py1(Rxy1+Ry1x)+Py2(Rxy2+Ry2x)…Pyn(Rxyn+Rynx)
E=energy predicted to e spent by individual in structure x
y1, y2…yn = structure of individual other than x
R=relevance
Rxy=relevance of structure x to structure y, etc"

Allport's friends, students, and colleagues had mixed feelings about the work. His brother Gordon was very supportive of the work, but also seemed to recognize the magnitude of the project if carried to completion in the manner Floyd envisioned. After reading one of Floyd's first articles on the topic, Gordon congratulated him, noting "I cannot help but feel that the line of thought you are following, and have followed these past years, is somehow 'right' in a completely cosmic sense." He expressed his belief, however, that "it may take science a millennium to know why and how in detail" (G.W. Allport, n.d.). He referred to Allport's work as "highly original" and "Einsteinian…nothing less than a major contribution to cosmology" and noted to Floyd that his delay in publicizing the theory was understandable given the magnitude of the task at hand (G. W.Allport, 1954a). In a 1955 letter, after congratulating him on the release of *Theories of Perception*, Gordon chided Floyd, suggesting that perhaps he had come to recognize the reality of the social after all, since social groupings were made up of event cycles just as individuals were: "Unless I am mistaken your erstwhile views of the group mind are here drastically revised. If collective structures are as self-maintaining as inside structures, we really have a kind of reversal in FHA" (G. W. Allport, 1955).

Hadley Cantril was another supporter of Allport's work; in a letter regarding event-structure theory, he noted, "It only confirms my feeling that 100 years from now when nearly all APA members will have been completely forgotten, you will stand out as one of the people of our day to be reckoned with" (Cantril, 1961). J. J. Gibson, then in the midst of developing his ideas regarding ecological approaches to perception, was also interested in event-structure theory; he saw significant similarities between Allport's work and his own, writing to Allport in 1966, "The problem of the structure of events and sequences is coming to be recognized as crucial at last. I hope you have it licked. I am taking a crack at it myself in my forthcoming

book" (Gibson, 1966). Allport received similar encouraging letters from those outside of

psychology, including biophysicist Martin Zwick (Zwick, 1973), linguist Jim Soffiete (Soffiete,

1967), and communications scholar William King (King, 1961). He also received offers to

publish the manuscript (Putnam, 1967).

Despite some of this enthusiasm for the work, others openly admitted to Allport that the

theory was all but impossible to follow. Richard Solomon, a former graduate student of Allport's

who had worked on the J-curve hypothesis, was hesitant about event-structure theory. As the

editor of *Psychological Review*, he wrote to Allport to indicate that while Allport should feel free

to send his work to the *Review*, outside reviewers would be needed to judge its suitability.

Referring to *Theories of Perception*, Solomon noted, "I found that last part of your book…very

hard going, and I confess that I understood very little of it."[70] His verbal explanations of the

theory did not fare much better; after presenting it at APA in 1966 in New York City, Allport

wrote: "The audience was very cordial (and chilly!) and I learned that they probably had

difficulty following its oral presentation (Allport, 1966).

Some of Allport's other former students attempted to spread word of the theory and

pushed Allport to publish on it. Charlotte Simon, who had gone on to work in a VA hospital,

wrote to Allport twice in 1958 noting that while people were showing interest in the theory, they

had trouble understanding it. She therefore urged him to publish a more comprehensive account

of it, since the account provided in *Theories of Perception* seemed too sketchy for some (Simon,

1958). Another former student, Leo Meltzer, suggested in 1961 that they apply to the Social

Science Research Council to fund a week-long or perhaps even summer-long conference on

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[70] In *Theories of Perception*, Allport devoted almost the entire book to an outline and analysis of contemporary theories of perception. In the last few chapters, he explained his own theory of structuring. The book was very popular, but reviews indicate that Allport's summary of the current outlook was what made the book a top seller; his theoretical work was not well understood.

event-structure theory (Meltzer, 1961). Similarly, Daniel Katz suggested they compile a volume

in Allport's honor, comprised of his key papers and some of those of his students (Katz, 1965).

Allport turned these offers down, indicating that he would rather spend his time pushing forward

with the multi-volume book.

<center>From Event-Structure to Enestruence: An Unfinished Manuscript</center>

By the 1960s, Allport's connection to his friends and colleagues began to fade further, as

he turned down the already decreasing number of academic offices and publication opportunities

offered to him (Darley, 1962). He remained highly engaged with his theoretical work and was

optimistic about its eventual impact. In 1965, referring to E. G. Boring's request for him to write

a publishable autobiography, he noted to Gordon that his "REAL or most significant contribution

to psychology" had not yet been made. He turned down the autobiography because "it might

deprive me of the time and energy to do it if I devoted time to a somewhat premature swan song"

(Allport, 1965a). In the meantime, Allport's theoretical work became increasingly complicated.

In the 1960s, he came to the conclusion that the common words used in his theory—words such

as "event" and "closure"—were too connected to their colloquial meanings. Because of this, he

began creating what he described to Gordon as "a whole new vocabulary of Latin and Greek-

rooted terms" (Allport, 1965b) and he began to describe the theory in completely abstract terms

and principles that he believed now spanned all of science. Familiar scientific words, such as

particle, *mass*, *motion*, and *force* were replaced with terms such as *kappa*, *delta*, and *chi*.

In line with this new vocabulary, Allport changed the name of the theory to *a theory of

enestruence*. His explanation of the name change illuminates the degree of complication the

theory had acquired by 1967:

The physical reality, "est," is "strewn along" the line of our denotational experience (kappa-delta). The prefix "en" will indicate that this is neither a mere inorganic nor a random strewing ("estruence"), but the constituting of an actual concrete entity—that is, "*en*estruence." (Allport, 1967a, p. 5).

By the following year, the two-volume work was tentatively titled *Structure, Form, and Process in Nature (Theory of Enestruence): An Inquiry in to the Problems of Form, Structure and Process in Animate Nature as Seen in the Light of a Neglected Ontological Aspect of Physical Reality.* His archival notes indicate that the first volume would be focused on the "chi-existential organism" while the second would focus on the "quasi psi-chi existential collectivity" (Allport, 1968a). In other words, the first volume dealt with biological and psychological phenomena while the second dealt with social phenomena. This new vocabulary made an already difficult idea nearly impossible to follow. Some of his colleagues continued to suggest that he present the material in a more simplified manner. Harvard psychologist Kurt Fischer noted that "your language…makes things a little harder sometimes; the strange words scare people away." Allport replied, noting that the language was necessary so that readers would not bring previous meanings to new concepts (Allport, 1968b).

Despite its growing size and complexity, Allport remained confident that he could complete *Structure in Nature*. However, the 1960s and 1970s proved to be difficult ones for Allport, as he dealt with the death of loved ones and his own deteriorating health. In 1965, his wife Helene died, affecting him deeply. Writing to Gordon, he noted that his manuscript had been put aside for months as he dealt with his grief: "I suppose one does pull through even such losses as this, though it's not been clear as yet just how" (Allport, 1965a). Six months later, he again expressed his grief to Gordon, noting its effect on his work: "How to go on—doing the

things we have to do, accomplishing what we want to, and realizing something of the dreams we have cherished if we can…that is the problem" (Allport, 1965c). Gordon continually acted as a friend, confidant, and supporter in these later years, but he too died just two years after Helene. In his last letter to Gordon, Floyd's awareness of his own limited time for completing the manuscript is apparent: "I find myself trying to get some faint glimpse of answers to what life is, before I have to pass on from mine in a cloud of human ignorance. I'm facing a dead-line, literally" (Allport, 1967b). Allport indeed began to struggle with his own health in the late 1960s, dealing with arthritis, a hernia operation, cataracts, and other ailments. This too slowed his work and he wavered between being confident that he would finish and then later doubting the possibility. He noted to a former student: "I feel myself increasingly now under the limitations of time and energy and must work more slowly than I did before" (Allport, 1968c) and to another friend, he wrote "I am not too hopeful about my project, but nevertheless will not change it even a little bit" (Allport, 1967c). In 1972, he was in and out of the hospital and his former students urged him to take a break from his manuscript (Rhine, 1972), but Allport pushed on anticipating a completion date of March, 1974. *Structure in Nature*, however, would never be completed; the last barely legible page is dated April, 1978, just six months before Allport's death on October 15, 1978 (Allport, 1978).

<div align="center">"A Problem of Cosmic Proportions"</div>

Despite the time and effort that Floyd Allport devoted to event-structure theory, the theory had very little influence on the social and behavioral sciences. References to the theory appear intermittently in the scholarly literature from the 1950s to the present, most commonly in the fields of leadership, management, communications, and organization studies (Klein, Tosi, & Cannella, 1999). The works that do reference the theory only scratch the surface of it, steering

clear of the later, more complicated incarnations. No one would pick the theory up after Allport's

death and the manuscript for *Structure in Nature* remains in boxes in the Syracuse University

Archives. Allport's final attempt to solve the problem of the individual and social was for all

intents and purposes, unsuccessful.

Though it was abstract, complicated, and seemingly far removed from his earliest work

on social facilitation, Allport's theory of enestruence was in fact just one final attempt to

explicate the nature of the social and its relationship to the individual. Looking back on his

career in 1974, Allport noted that his turn towards theory was precipitated by a colleague's

critique of his reductionist, individualistic stance in the 1930s:

> One of my more thoughtful critics wrote me in substance as follows: "You'd better be
>
> careful how you attack the group concept or use the term 'group fallacy.' Is not the
>
> individual also simply an integration of many parts or processes which often cannot be
>
> explained or spelled out in detail? In your attacks on `group fictions' you may also be
>
> selling the individual short." It struck me that this critic was absolutely right (Allport,
>
> 1974, p. 17)

Allport's theoretical work was therefore a way of addressing this central difficulty of his earlier

approach. However, it did not lead Allport to withdraw his earlier criticism and accept group-

level concepts as tenable scientific objects. While Allport's thoughtful critic seemed to be

intimating that he should abandon his reduction of wholes into parts and processes, Allport

instead began to treat the individual much as he had the group; he began to rethink the idea of

collectivity altogether and suggested that the individual also represents a kind of collectivity.

Taken even further, Allport began to see all phenomena in the biological, psychological, and

social realms as collective action situations, comprised of entities involved in series of events.

Reading the progression of Allport's work during this time, it becomes clear that as he settled deeper into the theory, he repeatedly stumbled upon the same problem, a problem that seems akin to what Hofstadter (2007) has called the "strange loop" phenomenon. Shifting from one level of analysis to another, from the biological to the individual, for example, Allport found himself always having to posit the existence of some entity, which when viewed through the lens of his theory, could not itself be considered an entity at all, but rather another collective structure of some sort. The "nodes" in his event-cycle always required explanation via the establishment of yet another event cycle. Furthermore, just what the nodes might be depended on one's subjectively adopted point-of-view. As Allport noted in 1961,

> What we see or conceive as the entity is relative to the coarseness or fineness of our observation or interpretation, and relative also to whether we are considering an aggregate situation as if from the outside or the inside. When we are in a position to work with an entity that we experience at one level, the entity as experienced by us at the other level disappears. We have never been able to identify and chart, or even to establish the existence of both levels and the structure of their connection in a single observation (Allport, 1961b, p. 196)

When viewed one way, any one of these entities may be a node; when viewed another way, it may be seen as the system itself, requiring further analysis. Furthermore, Allport viewed each entity and each system as being always in a dynamic state, resulting in structural changes both locally and across the entire system. Capturing this system at any level of analysis was therefore no simple task. It was perhaps this problem that led him to abandon the notion of nodes or entities altogether and revert to the language of Greek letters to avoid perception of the nodes in a cycle as self-contained entities. In essence, Allport abandoned the notion of an "entity"

altogether by the 1970s. His search for the social had morphed into a search for the basic structure and dynamics of reality.

In some respects, Allport's theory of enestruence illustrates a significant change in his views on the problem of the individual and the social. It is clear that by the 1960s, Allport no longer supported the notion that wholes could be simply reduced to their parts for the purposes of explanation. His early views of the division of labor among the sciences—whereby sociologists could describe groups at a sociological level while psychologists explained them at a psychological level—were clearly very much changed. Reductionistic explanation no longer made sense for Allport in the 1960s. As he struggled with the notion of scientific entities more generally, his confidence in the individual as the central object for psychological science waned and eventually dissipated. The individual, like the social, was a system requiring explanation. His previous denouncements of the group seemed to him now to have been overly simplistic (Allport, 1961b).

It is important to note, however, that Allport's later theoretical work was still very much tied to the problem of the individual and the social. While he recognized that his earlier views were too facile, he also saw them as simply not having gone far enough. In an article reviewing his previous ideas about the individual and the group, Allport noted this change, stating, "it is not a question of a 'societal' versus a 'natural' order, or even of the 'individual' versus the 'group'" (Allport, 1961b, p. 196). Instead, the problem was much larger, since it involved understanding collectivity more generally:

It may seem to the reader very strange, if not incredible, that behind the comparatively simple issue of the 'group mind,' in 1924, there could have been lurking a problem of such cosmic proportions, and that everyone concerned, in one sense or another, had

'missed the boat.' Yet to me in 1961 it seems all too evident that this was so" (Allport,

1961b, p. 196)

Looking back on his career, Allport himself saw continuity in his work, describing his repeated

attempts to explicate the nature of social groups. He believed that while he had not erred in

attempting to expose the group fallacy, he had erred in failing to see just how large the difficulty

was. Rather than critiquing the sociologists' conceptions of the group, he believed he should

have delved further into the problem. Dispelling talk of groups, he recognized, would not have

done much to advance the social sciences; such collective concepts needed to be thoroughly

scrutinized rather than dismissed (Allport, 1962).

Indeed, reading Allport's *Social Psychology* alongside his later work on enestruence, one

sees another kind of continuity in his work over the course of his life—the extremely ambitious,

confident, and aggressive way that he approached the problem of the individual and the social.

Following his work, it becomes clear that Allport was always steadfastly searching for a

scientific solution to the social that would provide the field with a framework characterized by

finality. Allport's writings demonstrate an almost unparalleled confidence in the existence of

some theoretical and scientific framework that could and would end debates about sociality and

his life's work—from 1919 until the 1970s—shows the unfolding of his search to find it. Though

his theoretical outlook changed over time and he began to see the simplicity of his earliest work,

his assertive, ambitious, and uncompromising search for that framework is evident across his

career.

The failure of Allport's theory was undoubtedly a combination of many factors, not the

least of which was his own increasing isolation from the discipline and the increasing complexity

of his work. In 1968, upon receiving the Gold Medal Award for Lifetime Achievement from the

American Psychological Association, Allport recognized this isolation, noting that as he delved further into his theoretical work, "I began to lose my colleagues, the social science profession, and in general everybody in my environment. They all said I was tilting at windmills" (Allport, 1968d). Indeed, as Allport continued to struggle with the concepts of collectivity, aggregates, and groups, the discipline he played a substantial role in creating had moved on, flourishing through the golden age of the 1950s, boldly facing the social conflicts of the 1960s, and struggling through the debates and disciplinary crisis of the 1970s. The problem of the individual and the group, which Allport believed was the "master problem of social psychology" (Allport, 1962), would continue to emerge from time to time in the literature. However, after almost 60 years of grappling with the issue, Allport's work—concentrated as it was so fully on the philosophical nature of reality—had little to readily contribute to this conversation.

Conclusion

In 1955, Gordon Allport wrote to his brother Floyd to acknowledge Floyd's latest work on the problem of the individual and the group in social psychology. He reminded Floyd that their father had always hung mottoes over his desk and suggested that Floyd perhaps do the same, using a poem by Austrian poet Rainer Maria Rilke:

> I live my life in growing rings
>
> which move out over the things of the world
>
> Perhaps I can never achieve the last
>
> but that will be my attempt.[71]

Indeed, Gordon's choice of motto for his brother seems quite astute: Floyd Allport's attempts to find a satisfactory way of approaching the individual and the social—something he had devoted his work to since graduate school—was a project that he would leave unfinished. From his earliest work on social facilitation until his final work on the theoretical structure of collectivity, Allport's entire career was centered on exploring the nature of the social in society and attempting to understand how to conceptualize it within the boundaries of a natural scientific framework. As the nature of sociality in American society shifted and changed, Allport's struggle with his subject matter also shifted, becoming increasingly intense until it saturated his entire outlook on social psychology, society, and eventually his entire philosophy of science.

As many authors have noted, this issue of conceptualizing, measuring, and modeling the social has been a part of social-psychological science since the discipline's inception (Faye, 2005; Greenwood, 2004). It has existed sometimes at the periphery and sometimes at the center of the field, and has resurfaced sometimes with force and sometimes as background noise (Faye,

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[71] Gordon wrote out the original quatrain in German in the letter (G. W. Allport, 1955). Thomas Teo provided this translation.

2012). As the present work has shown, the issues at the center of the disciplinary debate were always alive and well in the work of Floyd Allport. His position in the field's history is therefore an interesting and important one. Allport helped to establish an individualistic social psychology in the 1920s and then spent the remainder of his life grappling with the methodological, moral, and conceptual difficulties that such an approach engendered.

<div align="center">Allport's Influence on American Social Psychology</div>

There is little doubt that Allport's early work had a significant, lasting, and defining impact on the scope and content of contemporary social psychology. As other historians have noted, Allport paved the way for a psychological social psychology that focused on individuals in interaction (Farr, 1996; Greenwood, 2004). His forceful and confident approach to the social indeed helped to establish the fledgling field along these lines in the early 1920s. However, it also served to alienate the field from approaches, philosophies, and methods that did not conform to an individualistic, behaviorist, experimental framework. As many scholars have rightly noted, Allport's work, and particularly his 1924 textbook, provided a sort of canon that psychologists could point to and give to new students when they required a view of the field that was straightforward and seemingly non-argumentative. Though his work would not eliminate other approaches, it did facilitate their marginalization from mainstream social psychology.

As Branigan (2004) has aptly noted, "textbooks make controversies disappear" (p. 165); this was indeed the case with Allport's work. The book provided psychologists with a view of social psychology as a settled science, characterized by consensus and progress rather than controversy and disparate problem-solving. This consensus was somewhat illusory in 1924. As Robert Farr (1996) demonstrates, the field was still in chaos in the 1930s, lacking a core subject matter, but Allport provided psychologically-oriented scholars with a concrete foundation upon

which they could build a science. In the 1930s, social psychologists may not have had a distinct sense of what their discipline *was*, but Allport's work had provided a strong argument for what it *was not*. Whether Allport's promotion of an individualistic social psychology was beneficial or detrimental to the field, it was—in this respect—highly successful. As was demonstrated in the first chapters of this work, the social had always posed a problem for social philosophers and social scientists. The problem had been both ontological and methodological, with scholars in constant debate over just what the social *is* and how such a thing could be fruitfully studied. The greatest difficulty for these scholars was the problem of individualism and collectivism: was the social simply a collection of individual entities or did the "whole" have characteristics that could not be gleaned from an understanding of the parts? This debate—so prevalent in the context of turn-of-the-century discipline building—was central to the newly emerging field of social psychology.

Allport was not the first to suggest that the field focus on individual psychological processes rather than collective concepts. Gabriel Tarde before him had taken a similar stance as had some early sociologists like Franklin Giddings. In fact, most early scholars of the social had to take a stance on this issue and individualism was promoted by many, resulting in many varieties of an individualistic social science, as well as many varieties of collectivist science. With so many varieties circulating in the early 1900s and the availability of many versions focused on the individual, it becomes necessary to ask why Allport's version was so widely adopted by psychologists while other versions—though well received—did little to quell the ongoing controversy over the future shape and form of the disciplines devoted to studying the social. A close examination of Allport's work suggests that his success was at least partially

rooted in two key characteristics of his work: his confident approach and its suitability for the *Zeitgeist* of 1920s psychology.

Allport presented his social psychology not as one potential approach to a fledgling field; instead he presented it as an objective summary of psychological social psychology, a definable field with clear boundaries and a clearly identifiable, cumulative body of scientific data. Such a formulation stood in stark contrast to the expansive philosophical literature on social psychology that was focused on debating different conceptualizations of the social. In addition, Allport's success was also rooted in the extent to which his approach conformed to the *Zeitgeist* of twentieth-century social science in the United States. It provided a practical way of studying the social at a time when social change and social influence were topics of central importance in growing urban centers. Importantly, it provided a way of studying these issues within a controlled, experimental framework focused on observable behavior. Such an approach had great appeal in the 1920s when behaviorism and experimental control were coming to exert significant influence on psychology and other human sciences (Danziger, 2000).

Because of these two characteristics of Allport's work—its forceful, confident character and its suitability for the *Zeitgeist*—Allport's social psychology was indeed central to the founding of the kind of experimental social psychology that dominates contemporary American psychology. As other scholars have noted, this focus on science and experiment indeed made his work particularly palatable for early twentieth century psychology. However, my work suggests that Allport's influence on the field was somewhat more intricate, involving more than just the provision of a prototype for social psychology that was in line with the scientism of the day. Allport's success was indeed rooted in his ability to draw psychologists to his social psychology, but it was also very much rooted in his successful alienation of other social scientists. This

alienation accelerated the establishment of psychological social psychology as an independent discipline by stifling interdisciplinary conversations—and therefore controversies and debates—regarding the contours of the social. Though interdisciplinary efforts would continue to some extent and their popularity would wax and wane over the following decades, American social psychology itself became a primarily psychological discipline that studied the individual.

Though there were exceptions, the different and sometimes contradictory approaches to early social psychology tended to line up according to disciplinary allegiances: psychologists maintained a view of the social that was different from that of the sociologists who maintained a view that was different from that of the cultural anthropologists and so on with economists, philosophers, and political scientists each taking different positions. Because these disciplines tended to work at different levels of analysis, they tended to adopt different conceptualizations of the social. Debates between these groups were often heated and not always congenial, but the conversation was usually a vibrant one, as scholars across disciplines argued for and negotiated their own versions of the social. Allport's contribution to this debate, however, had a strikingly different tone and approach. He claimed a very particular brand of the social as belonging to the realm of psychology, excluding all other forms of sociality from that field. In adopting such a firm, territorial, and unyielding approach to the social, Allport's work was pivotal in severing ties between the social science disciplines. Furthermore, his descriptions of and prescriptions for the treatment of the social in other areas of study irritated scholars of those disciplines. This, combined with the rigidity of his own views of the social, made disciplinary exchange seem nearly impossible.

At a time when disciplinary boundaries were already losing their fluidity, Allport's work contributed significantly to the growing practice of carving up the social world between the

disciplines and letting each address it in its own ontological and methodological manner. This division of labor most definitely helped to establish the disciplines, including social psychology. In this way, it becomes clear that while Allport's influence was indeed a result of the attractiveness of his system for psychologically-oriented scholars, it was also a result of his confrontations with scholars from other disciplines. He drew psychologists in, but perhaps his more formidable task was the extent to which he shut most sociologists and anthropologists out. It is in his debates with these social scientists that he expressed his views most clearly and in some cases, most bitingly.

Finally, it is also important to recognize that Allport's role as gatekeeper of psychological social psychology extended beyond his textbook and his academic writings into his work as editor of the *Journal of Abnormal Psychology and Social Psychology*. The journal was one of only a few outlets for social-psychological work and as the first editor, Allport had a distinct opportunity—through vetting of content and reviewing of current work—to further promote a particular brand of social psychology and direct the discipline towards to it. Using all of these means, Allport's altered the course of American social psychology by temporarily containing debates about the social using forceful arguments for the sovereignty of an individualistic approach for psychological science. Other approaches to the social could coexist, but they would have to do so in separate, descriptive, quasi-scientific disciplines.

After 1924: Allportian Individualism in Flux

Histories of social psychology almost always include the work of Floyd Allport as an important historical piece of the discipline's history. However, with few exceptions, Allport does not appear in these histories after the 1920s has been discussed and analyzed. As these histories leave the 1920s behind, they also leave Allport behind—perhaps rightfully so, since Allport's

direct influence on the discipline faded after the 1920s (see Collier, Minton, & Reynolds, 1991; Jackson, 1988). The field of social psychology, once embroiled in philosophical and disciplinary debates about methods and subject matter, became more problem-oriented in the 1930s and 1940s. The Depression and the war years nourished a social psychology that was more focused on defining, studying, and ameliorating the myriad of social problems and conflicts that seemed to plague the nation. The philosophical problem of the individual and the social, so fervently debated in the early 1900s, took a backseat as studies of poverty, conflict, race relations, propaganda, and morale came to the fore (Cantril, 1934; Cartwright, 1948; Krech & Crutchfield, 1948). Though Allport participated in this study of relevant social problems, his work during this period simply did not stand out in any particular way or impact the field significantly. Because of this, little is written about this second period in Allport's career.

An examination of Allport's later work, however, paints an interesting and much more complex picture of his individualism, and in doing so also sheds light on the relationships between ideas about sociality and the larger social context in which they are developed. Allport's early individualism is relatively well-understood and well-documented. However, as this work has shown, it was also relatively short-lived. By the 1930s, he had come to question his early, simplistic approach and began to view his reductionism as untenable. He came to believe that such a reductionism, if carried through logically, would dissolve not just the social group but all collective entities more generally. Though Allport continued to espouse an individualistic position for the next four decades, it was a very different and always changing form of individualism. Furthermore, though the rest of the discipline moved forward employing many facets of the experimental, behaviorist, and individualistic framework laid out by Allport in the early 1920s, Allport himself began to see problems with this framework and experienced

difficulties with his own conceptualization of the social. Unwilling to abandon his individualism and his scientific ideals, yet also aware of the complications of reductionism, he began to rethink his conceptualization of the social and of collectivity more generally in the 1930s, commencing a project that would consume him until his death 40 years later.

Allport's ongoing struggle to grapple with the notion of the social also reveals the extent to which ideas about sociality were so strongly tied to the changing social and cultural fabric of twentieth-century American life. Placing Allport's early radical individualism in its context and following it through the later stages of his career makes it seem less simplistic, less radical, and almost commonplace. Allport's individualism was conceptualized at a time when many were concerned over the place of the individual in an increasingly complex, urban, industrialized society. Furthermore, it captured an understanding of the social as rooted in small groups and face-to-face interactions, an image that made sense in the early 1900s before sociality and ideas of social influence were drastically altered by a multitude of social factors such as large-scale urbanization, radio, television, increasing social bureaucracy and regulation, and continued global conflict. It is also likely that this more simplistic vision of the social made more sense to a younger Allport, who—having grown up in small towns and smaller urban centers of Northeast Ohio—had lived in Boston for only a short time when he formulated his earliest social psychology. It is important to remember that Allport's theoretical ideas about the social were formed very early on, as part of a doctoral dissertation that was based on the work and ideas of his first mentors.

Allport's understanding of the individual and the social consistently mirrored the social changes he witnessed, as he focused first on interindividual contact, then institutions and nations, and eventually grand, dynamic systems of collectivity. As the social world around Allport

became increasingly complex and as his own awareness of just how complex it could be expanded, Allport's theories and approaches to collectivity also underwent significant changes. This suggests a somewhat different view of Allport, one that is not entirely consistent with our view of him as a staunch, unyielding proponent of an individualistic social psychology. Examining the later periods of Allport's career and placing his work within the social context paints a picture of him as a scholar and a citizen struggling to identify a useable approach to sociality that could address modern problems while still abiding by the much-cherished principles of scientific inquiry. For Allport, this task proved extremely difficult, so much so that in addition to rethinking his approach to sociality, he also began rethinking his approach to science. Though the discipline adopted many aspects of his framework for conceptualizing the individual and the social, he himself struggled with it for decades, labeling it the "master problem" of social psychology.

Exploring Allport's work beyond 1924, examining the archival record, and delving into the social context of that work also illuminates another significant aspect of his individualism: the highly moral and political nature of it. Branigan (2004) has suggested that in social psychology particularly, experiments provide a way of dramatizing or staging a moral imperative:

> We look to social psychology, not only to learn 'facts' about ourselves, but to assist us in determining how to act and behave in society. In other words, the objective of our knowledge is deeply intertwined with our moral and political imaginations, and our projection of how we plan our futures (pp. 149-150)

Branigan views social-psychological experiments as "morality in an experimental idiom", almost akin to therapy, allowing scientists to "confront what troubles people in everyday life" (p. 33)

while still maintaining the authority, expertise, and respect associated with the scientific enterprise. For Branigan, it is not a simple matter of science being a reflection of social context, nor is it simply a matter of science being imbued with social values, with the experiment serving as a mask for these values. Instead, the process is more subtle. Often unbeknownst to the experimenter, he or she identifies pressing social and ethical issues, formulates ideas regarding the mechanisms behind them, and then creates conditions under which these mechanisms can be put on display. In this way, science becomes a theater of sorts. Brannigan argues that this was the case with Milgram's obedience experiments, as well as the work done on conformity by Solomon Asch and Muzafer Sherif.

The present work suggests that this was also the case for Allport, despite his own repeated insistence on value-neutrality in social psychology. Allport's individualism is most commonly described in the context of 1920s experimentalism and behaviorism and characterized primarily as a form of radical, methodological individualism. These facets of his work are indeed prominent and important, but as one follows Allport's story beyond 1924, it becomes increasingly clear that his focus on the individual was rooted not just in his ideals regarding methods and science, but also in his ideals regarding society. This later work makes it clear that for Allport, the dangers of personifying collective concepts were not limited to the potential for crossing the boundaries of scientific rigor. In fact, in the 1930s and 1940s, Allport seemed much more concerned with the moral and political dangers of such personification. Though he conducted few experiments in these later years, those that he did design served as platforms for exploring the potential outcomes of such personification and simultaneously demonstrating how to cultivate freethinking, rational individuals who would not succumb to such collectivist thought. This moral aspect of Allport's individualism is pervasive from 1930 to 1950 and his

system of thought cannot be understood apart from it. Furthermore, it is nearly impossible to detangle the methodological, ontological, and moral aspects of Allport's individualism in this period. What is clear, however, is that it had changed significantly since 1920, as Allport struggled to relocate the individual in the increasingly complex web of social life in twentieth-century America.

<div style="text-align:center">Founders and Unfinished Projects</div>

In a 2006 article titled "Lunch with Leon," psychologist Michael Gazzaniga recounted his memories of his colleague and close friend, Leon Festinger (Gazzaniga, 2006). Most scholars know Festinger as the man behind theories of social comparison and cognitive dissonance and identify him with his book *When Prophecy Fails*. His work on dissonance, conducted during the golden age of social psychology, was highly successful and as Gazzaniga rightly notes, Festinger was, by the 1950s, considered a "doyen" of the field. But, what became of Festinger after his groundbreaking, golden-age studies? As Harold Gerard (1999) notes, Festinger's involvement with social psychology was relatively short-lived. After noting that Festinger's impact on the discipline may have been greater than that of anyone else, Gerard points out that "he spent so little time—about twenty years—working among us" (Gerard, 1999, p. 60). Indeed, in the 1960s, Festinger moved away from social psychology into the study of visual perception and in the 1970s ceased to do laboratory work altogether.

By 1980, Festinger had become rather disillusioned with experimental social psychology, expressing distaste for both quick laboratory projects and problem-driven applied work (Festinger, 1980). He had come to see laboratory problems as too narrow and his own interests had become increasingly broad. Such work, he suggested, was suitable for the young: "Young men and women should work on narrow problems. Young people become enthusiastic easily.

Any new finding is an exciting thing. Older people have too much perspective on the past and perhaps, too little patience with the future" (Festinger, 1983, p.1). From this point forward, Festinger devoted his time to an in-depth study of the history of technological innovation in different cultures, exploring traditions and practices dating back to the seventh century. He became more and more entrenched in a large and increasingly unwieldy project, studying a wide range of interacting social factors such as economics, religion, and climate. Reading Festinger's work, however, one can see that he was still concerned with the same kinds of problems that he had found himself confronting in the laboratory: the problems of social life. As he noted in 1980: "I would only wish for…a place far enough away to stand so that I could see human society clearly" (Festinger, 1980, p. xv). Festinger would never complete this project; the manuscript was unfinished when he died in 1990.

Festinger's early and quick rise to scientific fame followed by his rather rapid exit from the field is strikingly similar to the story that unfolded a few decades earlier for Floyd Allport. He too conducted early pioneering work, quickly became very well-known in the field, and then just as quickly began to follow other interests that were far removed from those that made him famous. He too became dissatisfied with the very kind of science that he helped to usher in and turned to a large and complicated project that would not—and perhaps could not—be finished in his lifetime. One might also point to Kurt Lewin, whose early and very celebrated experimental and applied work overshadowed his later attempts to construct a grand psychological theory that would help to conceptualize the individual and the social (Eng, 1978). Lewin, too, was unable to complete the work and despite his continued popularity in the field, few of those who came after and followed him understood this later work (Danziger, 2000; Eng, 1978). These three central contributors to social psychology—Allport, Festinger, and Lewin—contributed to social

psychology in very different ways, but they share this interesting pattern of having moved further away from the phenomena and practices with which they are most commonly associated and searching in other fields and disciplines for assistance in formulating an adequate conceptualization of social life.[72]

There were other interesting commonalities in the later work of Allport, Lewin, and Festinger. All three seemed to question the utility of the kind of cause-and-effect social psychology that currently dominates the field. For Festinger, this kind of approach failed to advance the field and he turned to comparative history, paleontology, archaeology, and other methods of study. For Lewin, this philosophy of science simply made no sense for social psychology since small changes in one variable cannot be readily observed in relation to small changes in an effect; instead, any change in a system or field is accompanied by a multitude of other changes, affecting the entire system (Lewin, 1927; Lewin & Korsch, 1939). For Allport, the experimental method—though useful—failed to capture the systematic patterns of collective action in social psychology as well as other sciences; instead, he began looking to systems theories, kinematics, and the structure of collective action to attempt to understand how variables in nature—including the social world—relate.

Another commonality among these pioneers is the extent to which their later work was forgotten by history or else assessed rather harshly. As one textbook author has noted "Lewin's topological theory, along with his egg-shaped illustrations of it, has disappeared from modern social psychology" (Goodwin, 2012, p. 305). Indeed, it has not fared well over the years, fading from the history of the field or being evaluated quite critically: one author described it as "no

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[72] Robert Farr (1996) notes a similar pattern in the work of William James, whose *Principles of Psychology* and his establishment of a laboratory of psychology helped to establish him as a leader in the newly developing field of experimental psychology. Only a short decade later, he turned to studies of religion and philosophy, becoming ambivalent about the science he helped to establish, which also led him to occupy a somewhat complicated place in the history of the field, something Farr refers to as the position of "compromised scientist."

more scientifically persuasive than a model made of toothpicks and marshmallows over dessert" (Martin, 2003, p. 17). Similarly, Festinger's later comparative historical work had little following among social psychologists, who continue to remember him as "brilliant, creative, and meticulous in designing and conducting experiments" (Aronson, 1999, p. 87). In some cases, Festinger's followers have also expressed considerable ambivalence about the experimental legacy that Festinger left for the field (Aronson, 1999). We have seen that this too was true for Allport. His later theoretical work, in which he reassessed many of his earlier ideas, is largely unknown; for social psychologists and for most historians, he is remembered as the scientist behind the phenomenon of social facilitation and as the spokesperson of early experimental social psychology. Ironically, the field became tied to the experimental practices and methods that they associate with these pioneers, though the pioneers themselves all eventually devoted their time to searching for a broader vision of the social. For Allport, Festinger, and Lewin, the approach, methods, and philosophy of social psychology were works in progress and, for all three, it was work that they left unfinished.

Perhaps, as Festinger himself noted in 1983, the laboratory is a place suitable to the temperament of youth, while theoretical and comparative system-building is more satisfying to those further along in their careers. Undoubtedly, a more extensive examination would reveal many scholars who have turned to theoretical or historical pursuits later in their careers. Nonetheless, the reasons for their turn toward theory and the nature of these pursuits are not frequently examined in the historical literature. Excellent work has been done examining the ways in which these early pioneers ushered in an experimental, laboratory-based social psychology. However, we know very little about how these early proselytizers later assessed the very paradigms they helped to create. It is an interesting question in social psychology, a field

which has, as Branigan (2004) notes, undergone repeated "periods of hand-wringing…that are never formally resolved" (p 19). These periods of conflict and debate in social psychology, epitomized by the crisis of the 1970s (Faye, 2012), were very much focused on critical examinations of experimentation and laboratory methods. Though Kurt Lewin had died before the onset of the crisis, Festinger and Allport were still working away on their individual projects. Neither contributed to the fervent debates over experimentation, instead choosing to pursue studies of the social that were quite far removed from the kind under fire by their fellow psychologists. In fact, by the time the discipline found itself in crisis, these early proselytizers of the experimental method may have already, for many years, been questioning the methods and philosophy of American social psychology.[73]

The absence of this later work from the historical record is somewhat understandable, since it had far less impact on the development of social psychology as a discipline. Historical stories focus on founders and fathers, paying attention to pivotal, important moments in the discipline under scrutiny, leaving other stories out in the interest of clarity and brevity. The historian, of course, must always be selective. However, this focus can often present a narrative with perhaps too much clarity, a narrative that masks the complications of a discipline and the concerns, conflicts, and uncertainties of its founders. Leon Festinger promoted the experimental method relentlessly, but he also struggled with it. Floyd Allport may have helped to usher in the age of individualistic, experimental social psychology, but his relationship with it became increasingly uneasy, leading him to set experimentation aside and search for a new philosophy of science. As Stam, Radtke, and Lubek (2000) have noted, social psychology's relationship with the experiment has always been a strained one; the present work suggests these strains may have

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[73] It would be fascinating to have had any comments from Allport regarding the crisis. However, he did not contribute to the literature and I have found nothing in his writings regarding it. Allport was quite elderly and in ill health when the crisis reached its height.

been particularly acute for some of the experiment's early and most ardent promoters. If these founders have played such a significant role in the history of American social psychology—as current historical narratives suggest—it seems it would be fruitful to explore their ideas and their work beyond the moment of what is considered to be their central contributions to the field's development.

The Hero and the Villain: The Making and Meaning of Myths in the History of Social Psychology

This kind of talk of fathers and founders always raises historiographical questions centered on "old" and "new" history, on historicism and presentism. Given Allport's status as ambivalent founder, these questions are important ones for understanding his role in the history of social psychology. The distinction between "old" and "new" history is by now a common one. Old history, also referred to as celebratory or ceremonial history, tends to focus on disciplinary progress. Leahey (2002) describes it as "smug and self-satisfied…viewing the past as a series of progressive steps leading to the supposed scientific wisdom of the present" (p. 15) and characterizes it as Whiggish, presentist, internalist, and historically ignorant. Leahey contrasts this type of history with new history, which conceives of science as "a fallible human enterprise inextricable from the rest of human history" (p. 15). Woodward (1980) points out that contemporary historical scholarship attempts to correct for bias via a "judicious combination of…presentism, historicism, internalism, externalism, quantitative, and qualitative" (p. 35). While such attempts by no means completely eliminate bias in historical scholarship, they are thought to reduce such bias.

Indeed, new history, contextualist history, or revisionist history[74] has contributed much to our understanding of the historical record across a multitude of disciplines, including the social sciences. By offering a novel perspective on a familiar series of events, revisionist historians not only greatly enrich our interpretation of those events; they also compel us to critically examine the ways in which we choose to package and portray our history. As such, they serve as an essential counterpart to the customary celebratory histories that precede them.

In a consideration of celebratory and revisionist history, however, a question arises: is one of these types of history more factual or 'true' than the other? In an essay entitled "Myth, rumor, and history," Cooper (2003) convincingly argues that both types of accounts may miss the mark. Employing the case of Eli Whitney, Cooper demonstrates that two historical accounts, both outlining Whitney's role as a progenitor of modern industry, have developed. She refers to the first as the "heroic inventor myth" (p. 84), while the second is deemed the "myth of the villainous charlatan" (p. 87). Early histories of Whitney focused on his successes and contributions and greatly exaggerated his influence on modern industry. Whitney is portrayed as having single-handedly created much of early twentieth-century technology. This, Cooper argues, presents a classic version of the hero myth.

As the history of technology began to proliferate, however, "the myth began to unravel" (p. 90). Historians began to question whether the multiple "firsts" attributed to Whitney were actually "firsts," whether Whitney should be given sole credit for these inventions, and most importantly, they began to question whether Whitney's actions were actually admirable. In the rewriting of history, the "hero myth" was debunked and surreptitiously replaced with the "villain myth:"

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[74] I use the term "revisionist history" in a neutral (rather than pejorative) sense to refer to accounts that attempt to challenge accepted or standard versions of the history of a given object, idea, person, *etcetera*.

The revisionist articles…effectively demolished the heroic Whitney myth among

historians of technology, demoting Eli Whitney from Father of the American System of

Manufacturers to fast-talking arms contractor whose only distinction was his earlier

invention of an improved cotton gin. The rumor-like processes that had created the myth

were now acting to create a new one, featuring Whitney as charlatan instead of hero

(Cooper, 2003, p. 92).

As Cooper goes on to note, however, neither the hero story nor the villain story turned out to be

quite accurate. Only once historians of technology "began to unpack and consider separately the

characteristics [of] both the hero myth and the villain myth" (p. 93) did they began to gain

insight into the intricate nature of the historical record. In the consideration of both accounts, a

more comprehensive chronicle emerged.[75]

Cooper (2003) notes another interesting outcome of such an analysis. In an examination

of hero stories and their villain story counterparts, the aim is not simply to "debunk" existing

accounts or to offer alternative perspectives. While these may indeed be the outcomes of such a

process, they do not necessarily constitute the sole aim of such an undertaking. Myths, Cooper

argues, are not simply something to be debunked; rather, since they are culturally shaped, they

may offer much insight into the nature of the culture in which they are created. "Myths" she

argues, "tell us about belief systems of different societies, including our own, and beliefs have

force in shaping actions that are the stuff of history" (p. 84). By examining both the hero myth

and the villain myth, we may further our understanding of the contexts in which these myths are

created. We may question the purposes that such myths serve and examine the ways in which

they simultaneously document the history and shape the future of an object, person, or idea.

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[75]Another classic example of this type of "hero-turned-villain" account may be found in historical scholarship on
Christopher Columbus (Schuman, Schwartz, & D'Arcy, 2005).

Myths, therefore, are not viewed as simple 'falsehoods;' rather, they are stories with an ideological purpose; historical changes in ideology lead to historical changes in the story. We may therefore look to the story in our attempt to understand these shifting ideologies.

Cooper's analysis of the making and meaning of historical myths aptly applies to the field of social psychology. Like the history of technology, the history of social psychology has its own set of myths and ideologies. Accounts of the history of the discipline, particularly textbook histories, have been largely dominated by celebratory hero stories. Among social psychology's one-time heroes, we may include Auguste Comte, Kurt Lewin, Norman Triplett, and William McDougall (cf, G. W. Allport, 1954; Jones, 1985). More recently, however, many historians have questioned the contributions of these previously nominated founders and have suggested that the best work of the discipline is to be found in the writings of other figures such as George Herbert Mead, Wilhelm Wundt, William James, and James Mark Baldwin (Farr, 1996; Greenwood, 2004; Morawski, 2000). In order to substantiate claims regarding disciplinary founders, both celebratory and revisionist historians tend to glorify the contributions of their nominated founder while simultaneously villainizing other contenders. It is thus that a historical figure becomes both hero and villain. Furthermore, temporal trends in the naming of particular heroes and villains reveal a great deal about changes in ideas regarding what social psychology was, is, and should be; as the ideology of the discipline changes, so too does its historical record. There is perhaps no better illustration of this phenomenon than the case of one of social psychology's most contentious figures: Floyd Henry Allport.

At the beginning of this work, I discussed an interesting trend in the portrayal of Floyd Allport in disciplinary histories of social psychology: Allport has frequently been cast as either the hero or the villain of the field—as the progenitor of an innovative and fruitful conception of

the social or as the father of a restrictive and asocial social psychology. After an extensive analysis of Allport's work in its social and intellectual context, it appears that both of these stories indeed have some veracity. Allport's work was indeed pivotal in the history of experimental, social psychology, helping to promote and spread the idea of an independent field rooted in experiment, individualism, and behaviorism. Social psychology indeed became increasingly experimental after the era of Allport's textbook and his vision of the social—centered on the individual in relation to social others and social objects—still permeates introductory textbooks and can be readily spotted in the general orientation of the kinds of experimental social psychology that dominate the contemporary periodical literature. Contemporary social psychology continues to study individual cognition, emotion and behavior in relation to social objects and social others. It relies primarily on experimental work devised in the context of relatively straightforward cause-and-effect mini theories that are tested by way of monitoring some kind of observable behavioral response (Kruglanski, 2001). Allport's vision for an experimental, individualistic social psychology is indeed alive and well in the field. For these reasons, his status as father or founder seems very much justified.

The question remains, however, regarding whether Allport was a heroic father or a villainous one. Clearly, evaluations of the qualitative impact of Allport's work are strongly tied to one's ideals regarding the scope, focus, methods, functions, and ideal future of social psychology. If one views the current individualistic, experimental focus of the field as a good model for social psychology, Allport becomes the hero, helping to establish this foundation and providing experimental exemplars that demonstrated how it could operate. If, however, one views contemporary social psychology as impoverished and asocial, as many contemporary authors do, then Allport may indeed be identified as the villain of the field, serving to put method

ahead of subject matter and dispelling a certain form of sociality from the field. Stories of the

development of social psychology have hinged on this important interpretive lens: Allport's

place in historical narratives has depended largely on the historian's own idealistic vision of a

science of the social and, in that respect, on whether he or she is telling a story of progress or

decline in relation to that vision. There is nothing inherently wrong with such narratives; as one

historian noted in 1958, history is useful for both description of the past and prescriptions for the

present and future: "Society's doctor, like the individual's, may justifiably inquire in the

patient's past to prescribe for present pain to promote future health" (Stephenson, 1958, p. 21).

Tales that employ an understanding of the past to understand, critique, or celebrate a particular

present; to potentially track a missed utopia; or to urge disciplinary reform all hold an important

place in tracing the history of a field.

Nonetheless, there is still something troubling about these tales of heroes and villains. In

his exploration of the historiography of rhetoric and composition, Charles Paine (1999) rightfully

notes that these kinds of histories provide a great deal of continuity and relevance in our

narratives, but in doing so they often miss the complexity of the events and our relationship to

them: "We seem to prefer to use history to tell us that we are *either* very much like or very

different from our forebears, when we should also note that our relationship with the past is

highly complex" (p. 36). Thinking about this statement in relation to Allport and our portrayal of

his role is compelling. Allport's work is presented as a complete break from philosophical

traditions, a prototype for experimentalism, and the launching pad for an asocial social

psychology. When we take a closer look, however, we find that Allport himself remained tied to

his philosophical past, continued to explore new philosophies of the social and of science more

generally, and fretted continually over the nature of the social both morally as well as scientifically. Our hero or our villain was indeed an ambivalent and troubled one.

Incorporating this ambivalence into the historical record complicates the categories of hero and villain but by no means dissolves the links between the historical narrative and the present. This ambivalence has a long history in the field and tracing that history may shed light on our continued debates regarding sociality and the history of its study. In addition, incorporating this ambivalence provides a different and perhaps more complex kind of link between social psychology's history and its present, one that recognizes the ongoing complications of the discipline and the consistent struggle to capture sociality. Indeed, conflicting stories about Allport result in part from clashes and discontinuity in contemporary ideas regarding what kind of sociality social psychology should embrace.

A New View of Allport's Role in the History of Social Psychology

My own interpretation of Allport's place in the history of social psychology differs somewhat from those that have come before it in one central way. My reading of his story does not provide a picture of Allport as being either hero or villain. Instead, my story seems to cast Allport as an outspoken, ambitious, and somewhat stubborn scientist who was struggling with a particularly complicated subject that also seemed to elude his contemporaries and successors. Indeed, the bold claims he made early in his career changed his field significantly and the ways in which he positioned himself as a champion of individualism make it tempting to tell his story and the story of social psychology by focusing on those early events. And, indeed, it is important to understand the ways in which Allport's work helped to shape the field in the early years. However, looking at Allport's work across the first half of the twentieth century provides an interesting view of him not as the hero or villain of social psychology, but rather as a sort of

mirror or microcosm of the larger field of social psychology. For both Allport and the discipline as a whole, conceptualizing the social—a project that initially seemed to have been simplified through the adoption of a natural science framework—proved to be difficult and required constant rethinking and revision.

For both Allport and the field at large, the early twentieth century was full of promise and excitement regarding the future prospects of social psychology. Scholars of the social seemed hopeful and confident that the adoption of a natural-scientific model of the social—something that was already underway—would prompt a turning point for the field, which had struggled to come to any kind of agreement regarding its subject matter and methods. Scholars expressed an unbridled enthusiasm for and faith in the experimental method as the key to social psychology's productive future. As psychology began to adopt the experimental method in the early 1900s, there was a growing sense that once social psychology followed suit, its progress would be immediate and immense. Perhaps even more importantly, experimentation was thought to be the key to creating a social psychology that could help to solve social problems.

John Dewey expressed these sentiments clearly in the midst of World War I, suggesting that the social sciences of his time were in the same position as the natural sciences in the seventeenth century; the adoption of an attitude of experimentation would help the social sciences see the same kind of steady progress witnessed in the natural sciences:

> if the history of human achievement in knowledge proves anything, it is that the all-decisive discovery is that of an effective and fruitful method. When men once hit, after endless awkwardness, upon the right road, the rest takes care of itself. Scientific movement becomes orderly and cumulative in the very process of occurring. Social and

mental phenomena become intelligible because they come within the scope of the

experimental method of attack" (Dewey, 1917,p. 274)

Dewey went on to note that, once they adopted the experimental method, the physical sciences

made great strides in terms of controlling the natural environment. He argued that control of the

social environment would similarly follow from an experimental social psychology. The result

would be not just a scientific field marked by steady progress, but also a field with many needed

practical applications. Like Floyd Allport, the majority of early social psychologists placed

intense faith in this new method and its seemingly vast potential for understanding and

ameliorating social problems. This faith translated into practice, as experimentation gained

prominence in social psychology in the 1920s and 1930s (Danziger, 2000). By 1937, the

experiment was considered by many to be the primary method of distinguishing social

psychology from social philosophy (Britt, 1937). This trend continued into the 1960s, when 87%

of studies published in the leading social psychology journal involved some form of

experimental manipulation (Higbee & Wells, 1972).

However, the rise of experimentation did not prove to be the all encompassing solution

that social psychologists, Allport included, had hoped for. Dissatisfaction with the progress of

the discipline continued to be expressed. In 1939, Kurt Lewin argued that experimental social

psychology had not adequately addressed larger-scale social patterns or phenomena, including

cultural, historical, sociological, and psychological facts. He noted that if the field was to

succeed, it would have to find a way of bringing these kinds of concepts together into the

laboratory (Lewin, 1939). Muzafer Sherif also questioned the extent to which the field had

adequately conceptualized its subject matter, observing that "our knowledge of social

psychology has advanced but a tiny fraction in proportion to the tons of research done in the

field" (Sherif, 1947, p. 73), and he argued that as a result, social psychologists could not adequately address pressing social problems. He suggested that the solution to this problem was to "stop the experiments for the time being, no matter how excellent they might be technically" (p. 74). In a 1950 article, Leonard Cottrell similarly questioned the advances of experimental psychology, even in the wake of the postwar boom in the field:

> Notwithstanding some rather reckless promises made by some in the heat of seeking commercial and government research contracts, a candid appraisal must find much of our terminology extremely fuzzy, our hypotheses lacking in rigorous casting and our methods as yet not well adapted for operationally testing our hypotheses or for yielding that consensual validation of observation upon which any community of scientists must rely (Cottrell, 1950, p. 706).

Other scholars expressed their concerns over social psychology in a more subdued manner, but they continued to openly question the progress of the field and the adequacy of its approach for addressing the realities of the social world (Klineberg, 1940; Murphy, Murphy, & Newcomb, 1937). Though the discipline flourished in these years, it continued to struggle with its subject matter, its methods, and its ability to adequately capture the social world, with scholars continually questioning the progress of the field.

This internal questioning in the field continued quietly but steadily throughout the early decades of the twentieth-century, but in the 1970s, it began to take center stage, as social psychologists grappled with a self-diagnosed disciplinary crisis (Faye, 2012). Many of the issues that arose in the course of the crisis were similar to those that had been debated throughout the discpline's history, including the theoretical orientation of social psychology (Ayres, 1918; Pepitone, 1981), the relationship between psychology and sociology (Ellwood,1919; Tosti,

1898), the appropriate methodological approach for studying social phenomena (Allport, 1919; Blumer, 1940; Pepitone, 1981), and the relevance of social science findings (Britt, 1937; Cantril, 1934). These issues, always present in the field's margins, were highlighted in the social context of the turbulent 1960s and 1970s, when the field's ability to solve pressing social problems came under close scrutiny. Social psychologists began to feel increased pressure from government and funding agencies to demonstrate that their field could do something to contribute to an understanding of real-world domestic and international problems. In-depth examinations of the field conducted at this time found it to be seriously lacking in this regard, contributing significantly to an ever-growing sense of disciplinary crisis (Faye, 2012).

As the 1970s drew to a close, the crisis began to dissipate, as scholars honed in on a new and productive social-cognitive approach to social psychology (Adair, 1991). Debates regarding disciplinary progress again took a backseat, but they continue to occupy a marginal but visible position in the field's periphery. As was the case in the early 1900s, social psychologists continue to grapple with the very complex nature of their subject matter: the individual and society. As Vallacher and Nowak noted in 1997:

> The phenomena of social psychology are remarkably complex. An individual's set of possible states and behaviors is complex enough in its own right; the interdependencies of different individuals increases such complexity in a multiplicative manner. Within even the most tightly constrained situation, the potential range of interpersonal thought and behavior is enormous (Vallacher & Nowak, 1997, p. 73)

Like Allport did in the 1950s, these authors question the utility of classic mechanistic approaches to the social, arguing that capturing the social in any thorough scientific sense would require an entirely novel theoretical framework. Such a system would necessarily be capable of grasping

the complex interrelatedness and interdependence of individual variables in a social system. Vallacher and Nowak (1997) therefore propose the use of nonlinear dynamical systems as a foundation for studies of the social and suggest that the laws of such systems are general enough that they apply not just to the social, but to "all systems that have similar relations among elements" (p. 96). Though the work is much clearer than Allport's, the resemblance between the two approaches is striking.

For both Allport and the field of social psychology, solutions regarding the conceptualization of the social have always been much more tenuous than they seem in our current historical accounts. Allport's social psychology was not linear or cumulative. Instead, his career looks more like a set of repeated experiments, as he sought to find some kind of fit between his scientific and social ideals, while also constantly adapting to the social changes around him. In this way, his work and his life reflect the same kinds of trials and tribulations that are visible in the biography of the discipline as a whole, including the tension between applied and basic work, the difficulties of maintaining the perhaps impossible line between science and activism, and of course the matter of dealing with the perennial problem of grasping sociality in a way that fulfilled the requirements of science but still accurately accounted for a social world that grew more complex with each passing decade.

Examining Allport's work in this manner and exploring it as an allegory for the trials and tribulations of the larger field provides us with a view of social psychology not as a progressive movement to or away from some desirable or undesirable version of social psychology. In the same way that we move away from a heroic or villainous Allport, we also begin to move past the historical story of social psychology as a discipline marching steadily towards one particular conceptualization of the social. Instead, we see a figure and a field both constantly experimenting

with a different version of the social, taking it as far as that conception of sociality seems to allow, and then altering it when it seems to fail. Both struggled to capture a subject matter that is extremely broad, constantly changing, and often of serious personal significance to those who study it. Tracing these various attempts to build a science of the social, and tracing them through their successes and their failures might not always lead us to a very cohesive narrative of social psychology, but it has the potential to lead us to something that is perhaps more interesting: a history of the construction, negotiation, and revision of the social within the field of social psychology as it has developed in the context of twentieth century history.

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