Social Science and Social Psychology: The Cross-Cultural Link

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(Expanded Version)

North American social psychology and Michael Doonesbury have much in common: they are white, middle class, educated, idealistic (but practical), likable, interesting. They are also naive, culturally pristine, politically ineffectual, and out of touch with social processes that are bigger than themselves. They seem to inhabit a charmed world that only occasionally intersects with the many other worlds on this planet. Their responses to these intersections, rare as they may be, are predictably disconcerting.

In this chapter I will attempt to demonstrate how social psychology can break its sociocultural insularity and come into a viable interaction with other cultural and intellectual worlds. My dual thesis is that this liberation can be accomplished by establishing a close and continuing relationship with the social sciences, and that one way such a relationship can be developed is through an intermediary, a "culture broker" as it were: cross-cultural psychology. (See Jahoda [1986] for a discussion of other ways that cross-cultural psychology can aid in straightening out social psychology.) I will discuss some existing social psychological theorizing that can contribute to this relationship, and I will attempt to dismiss a few of the misgivings that social psychologists might have in coming into contact with the uncertainties of other worlds. Finally, I will offer an antithesis to the second part of my thesis: that social psychology (and Mike Doonesbury) are the products of material forces on which this chapter, indeed this book, can have little impact.

Thesis: Social Psychology Needs the Social Sciences

Two Insularities

A growing number of psychologists have railed against psychology's and social psychology's cultural insularity and isolation from the social sciences. Early charges of this sort came during the "Crisis" years, most often from individuals I respectfully refer to as the "deviants" of our discipline: Gergen (1973),

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Moscovici (1972), Pepitone (1976), and others. Despite the waning of the Crisis, criticism along the same lines continues:

...social psychologists seem to be deliberately insulating themselves from clinical, sociological, anthropological, and a variety of other sources of knowledge about human behavior. ...the administrative functions of a department serve to preserve what may be outmoded disciplinary identities and inappropriately compartmentalized research (R. Jones, 1986, p. 537).

Concerns such as these have become increasingly widespread, and seem to have penetrated the inner circle of establishment psychology (e.g., Kennedy, Scheirer, & Rogers, 1984; Spence, 1985).

**Effects of Insularity**

Many psychologists have commented on the nature and effects of this broad charge of insularity. I will briefly summarize these earlier comments and point out how these problems are at least in part a result of social psychology's isolation from the social sciences.

_A value laden science._ One point of view is that social psychology is too wrapped up in what it is doing to consider the relationship between its enterprise and the social milieu in which it exists (Hogan & Emler, 1978; R. Jones, 1986; Pepitone, 1981; Sampson, 1977, 1981; Spence, 1985). The effect of American individualism on American psychology has received the most attention. "American psychology, invented in and by American society, went on to invent its subject matter: the self-contained individual" (Sarason, 1981, pp. 835-836). Pepitone (1981) notes how the values of psychology as a whole—empiricism, objectivism, behaviorism, operationalism, reductionism, materialism, mechanism, universalism, and individualism—have in turn shaped social psychology, particularly its individuocentric treatment of group dynamics. The charge that psychology is value-laden has led to the development of a literature on the issue of values in psychological science, and has encouraged many psychologists to take positions on the issue (cf. Fiske & Shweder, 1986). Spence (1985) and others have noted that a better understanding of our own cultural values might alert us to our biases and help us overcome them. I see this concern as a very healthy sign that psychology is less naive about its relationship to society and more aware of the relevance of the philosophy of science to what it is doing. I believe that additional contact with the social sciences in which these issues are continually debated, especially sociology, will encourage more such debate within psychology. Psychology may be one of the few social or behavioral sciences that does not emphasize philosophy of science in its graduate training (Hogan & Emler, 1978), pointing to a traditional lack of disagreement among psychologists on such basic issues.

_Incomplete, imbalanced range of phenomena._ Several critics have pointed out that social psychology has failed to study some important areas of social life, such as religion, social class, and political economy, but has expended considerable energy in other areas, particularly those involving "cool" cognition such as consistency theory, attribution theory, person perception, and much of what falls under the general category "social cognition" (e.g., Latané, 1986; Sarason, 1981; Sears, 1986). Along somewhat the same lines as Carlson (1984), Sarason (1981) charges that social psychology is insufficiently social: "...social psychology had never come to grips with the history, culture, and organization of American society" (p. 832). He blames this problem on psychology's individualistic bias. I would extend this explanation to include the deep rift between psychology and the social sciences that work with issues such as religion, social class, culture, and organizations at a higher level of analysis and with different methods than psychology.

Sarason's (1981) point about an "asocial psychology" is made in the context of charges that clinical psychology's imitation of post-World War II psychiatry is misdirected. He blames this misdirection in part on social psychology. He claims that if social psychology had been more social it would have been the basis for a clinical psychology that might have taken a non-psychiatric course, emphasizing
primary prevention (Albee, 1986) and the social determinants of maladjustment, and possessing the capacity to work effectively within the political environment to formulate public policies to aid this effort. Since clinical psychology may be the major area of application of social psychological concepts (cf. Weary & Mirels, 1982), social psychology's insularity, asocial nature, or incompleteness can have broad implications outside of the laboratory (R. Jones, 1986).

**Generalizability.** A third effect of insularity is to reduce the external validity or generalizability of social psychological findings and theories. Sears (1986) and Findley and Cooper (1981) have demonstrated the extent to which social psychologists study college student "subjects" in laboratory settings. Few social psychology studies systematically explore the generalizability of theories to other populations within this society, despite evidence that the theories do not necessarily generalize (e.g., Biddle, Warneke & Petty, in press). This issue has given cross-cultural psychologists a sense of mission, and they have made a ministry of pointing out how the cross-cultural method can aid in enhancing external validity within and across cultures (e.g., Brislin, 1980). The problem runs deeper than merely performing replications in exotic places, however. Psychological theories lack external validity in the sense that they fail to include "hooks" to variables that are usually outside of social psychology's individual-oriented "family" of variables (Pepitone, 1976). Pepitone suggests that increased interaction with social science would provide social psychology access to the families of variables with which they customarily work, including ecological, economic, and sociopolitical conceptions.

**Crippled research programs.** Spence (1985) and others have pointed out that psychologists tend to bury themselves in their data and lose track of the larger issues to which their research speaks. On the one hand, this tendency may be a result of the individualistic value-bias that has received considerable attention over the past decade. However, I suspect that it is also due to a great extent to the proclivity of social psychologists to be oblivious to the relationship of their research to that of the social sciences. Sometimes this naiveté leads to seriously crippled research programs, such as the gaming research that was popular during the Viet Nam War. As E. Jones (1985) points out, this (voluminous) research has been severely criticized for trying to apply laboratory bargaining studies performed with individuals to real-world conflict among nations (e.g., see Pepitone, 1976, 1981). Social psychology wanted to help out, to change the world, but did not have the tools to do so.

When social psychologists' ignorance of social science does not lead to meaningless research, it does lead to research that is seriously incomplete, ignoring the roots of interpersonal or individual processes in a social and historical context. For example, Pepitone (1976) discusses how social science concepts, particularly normative influences located in "sociocultural collective units" that encompass individuals, are needed to overcome limitations in several major research areas, including equity theory, dissonance theory, aggression and punishment, attitudes and attitude theory, and game theory. The observation that social psychological theories are incomplete does not imply that they are incorrect within their particular contexts, or that they are uninteresting, or that they are absolutely not worth pursuing. I suggest that you can be a good social psychologist doing things as they have been done so far, but you would not be a particularly good social scientist and your research would have little impact outside of your discipline or your society.

**Triviality of effects.** A recurring criticism of social psychology from the Crisis Era to the present has been that its research effects account for little variance, can only be obtained by "running" unacquainted subjects in sterile laboratory settings, and are often merely demonstrations of already-accepted hypotheses (e.g., Chapanis, 1967; Jahoda, 1979; McGuire, 1973; Triandis, 1975). Dissonance theory has been a favorite target. These and other critics (e.g., Hogan & Emler, 1978; Pepitone, 1981; Secord, 1986) have suggested that a more complex array of variables must be considered if behavior is to be understood and predicted, including social structure, social roles, situations, normative systems, historical
change, and so on. These are not variables that can be used without learning something about their century-long development in sociology, anthropology, and other social sciences. Proper consideration of such variables should also have an appropriate humbling effect: much of social psychology may be viewed as working with mere "residual variability," observable only after the large effects of these other variables have been hidden through experimental controls.

The psychology of the American people. Some social psychologists have noted that social psychology is essentially a very odd way of doing anthropological, ethnographic research (e.g., Laundauer, in D'Andrade, 1986), that it is implicitly a psychology of the American people (Bond, 1986). Bond points out that research on the Chinese is explicitly or implicitly comparative with the West or the United States, but that U.S. research is "innocent of historical or cultural overlay" (p. 217). U.S. psychology seems unaware of the anthropological nature of its work. I suggest that an ongoing, interactive relationship with anthropology would help remedy this situation.

Getting Worse?

Two decades after the beginning of social psychology's Crisis, there are indications that the field is becoming more insular rather than less so. One unfortunate development is the infusion of personality concepts into social psychology (Carlson, 1984). Despite the work of the interactionists in the personality area, personality is still viewed as a dispositional, internal construct that resides in individuals, not collectivities (Sampson, 1981), and its growing presence in social psychology leads to a more individuocentric focus that promotes insularity. A second problematic development is the social cognition movement, which might be viewed as an heir to the Crisis. In its attempt to develop a rigorous, universalistic social psychology, the social cognition group has brought to social psychology an even lower unit of analysis deep inside the organism, and has promoted cultural and disciplinary insularity to a greater extent than any other single development. The Crisis also seems to have encouraged an interest in applied social psychology and "relevance." Whereas this is a good sign, it is disturbing to note that social psychology seems to "spin off" these areas (e.g., Proshansky, 1976), maintaining a core that is relatively narrow.

Mainstream social psychology seems to be quite content, despite the accumulating criticism of the Crisis, the contextualist movement (Gergen, 1982) and the rising cross-cultural critique of which this volume is a part. "The great paradox of our field, I believe, is that we are thriving on ideas, accomplishments, applications to human problems, and so on, and yet we continue to have far too few young people entering the doctoral programs... (Harvey, 1987, p. 2). Russell Jones offers a different assessment:

Nobody likes to be criticized, and many people believe that social psychology is doing quite well, thank you. In fact, one of the leading lights recently dismissed some of Gergen's critiques by stating that "the dogs bark, and the caravan moves on." Such arrogance... (1986, p. 539, italics added).

Thesis: Culture Brokering

The second part of this chapter's dual thesis is that cross-cultural psychology can act as a culture broker to help bring social psychology in contact with social science and the psychologies of other societies.

Geography Lessons

A culture broker must share many of the characteristics of the cultures it seeks to broker. Cross-cultural psychology's position between social psychology, social science, and the psychologies of other societies enables it to perform this culture broker role. One way that this intermediate position of cross-cultural psychology can be assessed is to examine the citation practices of individuals publishing in psychology, social science, and cross-cultural journals. Citation patterns may indicate several interesting things about journal article
authors, including what journals they read or at least scan for relevant papers, the extent to which their research interests are similar to those of members of the scientific subdisciplines the cited journals serve, and the extent to which various subdisciplines offer theoretical or methodological approaches deemed useful or appropriate.

A content analysis of 3305 journal references in 177 papers recently appearing in Journal of Personality and Social Psychology (JPSP), Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology (JCCP), Ethos, American Anthropologist, and American Sociological Review was performed for this chapter. The cultural insularity of mainstream social psychology was illustrated in the lower percentage of foreign journals cited by JPSP (3%) than by JCCP (10%) or the three social science journals (6, 10, and 4%). Its isolation from the social sciences is evident in the percentage of social science journals cited by JPSP (10%), in contrast to JCCP (21%) and the social science journals (47, 65, 68%).

The intermediate position of cross-cultural psychology can also be seen in the covariances of the patterns of journal citations found in these journals. Pearson correlation coefficients were calculated for all pairs of journals included in this analysis using number of citations in each content analysis category as the unit of analysis. The average correlations of JCCP with the three JPSP sections and the three social science journals were .83 and .46, respectively. However, the correlation of JPSP with the social science journals was quite low, .14 (mean of nine correlations). Overall, these two sets of data show that JCCP occupies an intermediate position between social psychology and social science.

Theory and Practice

One means by which cross-cultural psychology can perform a culture broker function is through the diffusion of its theoretical and methodological practices into mainstream social psychology. At the theoretical level, cross-cultural psychologists must, due to the phenomena they study, be sensitive to variables normally in the purview of social science. They find it important to tie social and personality variables to social structural variables and often to the ecological and economic variables that in turn underlie social structure. The outstanding example of this research approach is Berry's (1976) study of the relationships among ecology, social structure, acculturation to the West, psychological differentiation and conformity in 17 culture groups. Cross-cultural psychologists must also be sensitive to subcultural variations, since these differences are often as important as differences between nation-states. A well-known example of this kind of research is the Lambert, Hamers, and Fraser-Smith (1979) study. These investigators found that parental child-rearing values are nearly as often a function of social class as of nationality in a study of 10 ethnic groups around the world. Consideration of these cultural, subcultural, and structural variables leads cross-cultural psychologists to be more explicit about the "scope conditions" (Jahoda, 1979; Sell & Martin, 1983; Walker & Cohen, 1985) of their hypotheses— their degree of external and construct validity— that constrain the generality of its findings. Put more strongly, cross-cultural psychologists cannot afford to be naive about the limiting conditions of their theoretical statements.

Cross-cultural psychology may be an ideal broker in reducing social psychology's cultural insularity through its concern with particular cultures. Cross-cultural psychology is necessarily tied to specific cultures in two ways. First, since most cross-cultural psychologists are working in part in cultures other than their own, they must reconcile their scientific, possibly ethnocentric or value-biased interpretations of the causes and meanings of the behaviors they observe with those of the people they are studying. Traditional social psychologists, however, working as they do almost exclusively with their own children (i.e., white middle class college sophomores), need not grapple with this problem and can safely make assumptions about the phenomenological experiences of their subjects (ultimately producing culturally bound theories). Cross-culturalists are forced to think in
a more culturally "decentered" or non-ethnocentric manner, and can in turn pass the insights gained through this exercise, if not the decenteredness itself, on to their colleagues. Second, cross-cultural psychologists must be aware of or, better yet, expert in the local conditions of the people they are studying, approximating anthropologists' "area" specializations (but see Doob, 1980, and the "sin of opportunism"). (Social psychologists are of course true experts in the local conditions of their own research.) Cross-culturalists, by being forced to be aware of the local conditions in which they work, must have a far broader understanding of both their own and of other cultures. The diffusion of this cultural sensitivity to social psychology, although good in its own right, imbues social psychology with content normally found only in the social sciences.

In a more general way, the cross-cultural approach forces psychologists working in just one culture to recognize explicitly that their research has no known generality to other cultures or subcultures. As Dollard (1935; in Sarason, 1981) noted, they must make liberal use of the phrase "in our culture." It also encourages them to consider the extent to which they know or care about the historical and sociocultural origins of the phenomena they study.

The challenge to social psychology is to develop the right "hooks" to social and cultural variables, many of which are outside of the individual level of analysis. Theory development, I feel, should "get grander" than it has been for many years, and the new theories should explicitly include the places where culture has an effect and where individual volitional behavior interfaces with social structure. A good example of an attempt to insert cultural hooks in attribution theory can be found in Bond (1983), where he lists five ways in which cultural variables can affect attributional processes. Triandis (this volume) performs a similar analysis at a somewhat higher level of analysis.

Course Work

The act of teaching or taking a course in cross-cultural psychology inevitably brings both instructor and student into closer contact with the social sciences.

Something for the teacher. From the instructor's point of view, the preparation of a comprehensive cross-cultural psychology course can be a mini-tour of social science. The beauty of cross-cultural psychology is that it has no real boundaries. Ideally, the instructor should have a passable understanding of elementary cultural anthropology and a better knowledge of psychological anthropology, including culture and personality studies, cognitive anthropology, cross-cultural anthropology (i.e., holocentric research) and transcultural psychiatry. On the psychology side, teaching such a course encourages generalism because the research covers a wide range of subdisciplinary areas, such as perception, cognition, child development, social psychology, personality and values, group interaction, and clinical psychology. An indeterminable number of specific topics ranging throughout the social sciences can be included in such a course, including ethnicity and ethnic groups, social class, intercultural communication, sojourner adjustment, psychological assessment, poverty, immigration, bilingualism and so on. Psychological and anthropological principles must be integrated, and theoretical approaches must be identified to perform these integrations.

Teaching such a course, more so perhaps than performing cross-cultural research in any particular area, forces the instructor to think like a social scientist rather than a psychologist, and to view psychology in a much broader manner. Taken-for-granted value biases within psychology are readily apparent when psychology is placed in context with the social sciences and the (comparatively small) degree to which psychological processes contribute to the course of history becomes clear.

Something for the student. Much of what I have said about the instructor's experience also holds true for students taking a course in cross-cultural psychology. However, whereas the typical cross-cultural psychology course instructor is already among "the Chosen," the students probably are not. By taking such a course, students gain the broader perspective
that the instructor has already discovered in preparing the course, and an eye-opening bonus— a sensitivity to culture and an understanding of the place of psychology in relation to the social sciences. My experience is that many students come out of such a course seeing "culture" everywhere they look, highly sensitized to certain features of their own society, and more understanding of others'. What in psychology seemed reasonable, necessary and obvious to them is a little less so, and they take some basic or hidden assumptions in psychology a little less for granted.

Clinical psychology is somewhat ahead of other areas of psychology in this regard. The Vail Conference in which the Doctor of Psychology (Psy.D.) clinical-practitioner model of professional training was developed recognized the unmet mental health service needs of ethnic U.S. populations and called for training in these areas. A small but growing number of clinical programs, including my own, offer or require courses related to cross-cultural psychology (Bernal & Padilla, 1982). A cross-cultural instructor in a Psy.D. program has a unique opportunity to circumvent the social research → clinical research → clinical application process by directly impressing upon clinical students the importance of structural, cultural, and subcultural variables to their profession. I believe such an instructor has a responsibility to "demystify" students concerning clinical psychology's relationship to the society in which it operates, perhaps in so doing supplying clinical psychology the tools it needs to move in some of the directions Sarason (1981) favors.

Brokering by Doing

Cross-cultural psychology may have an integrating effect through the kinds of behaviors that cross-cultural psychologists naturally perform if they are active in the area.

Brokering people. Since cross-cultural research is exceedingly difficult and must normally be performed collaboratively, cross-cultural psychologists must maintain contacts with psychologists in other parts of the world. A recent example of such collaboration is the work of the Chinese Culture Connection (1987), 23 psychologists who worked together to perform a 22-nation study of Michael Bond's Chinese Values Survey. Collaboration of this sort on the part of cross-cultural psychologists in psychology departments reduces psychology's cultural insularity and leads to a cross-fertilization of ideas that aids all involved. Cross-cultural psychologists become, in a sense, transnational brokers of personal contacts and ideas; conduits, if you will.

License to deviate. Cross-cultural psychologists are deviants within their discipline, or as Cole (1984, p. 1000) puts it, cross-cultural psychology is a "slightly miscreant stepchild" of psychology. Many cross-cultural psychologists have found niches within establishment psychology, and as such psychology has given a deviant subgroup license to work in-between, in the areas that fall outside of psychology or on the boundaries of several disciplines. Cross-cultural psychologists in such situations have the freedom, and perhaps the responsibility, to read and be otherwise active throughout the social sciences, acting as intellectual culture brokers bringing to each something of the other.

Some Strategies for Integration

I have argued that social psychology needs increased integration with the social sciences and that cross-cultural psychology can aid in performing this integration. It would be difficult and possibly inappropriate to map out precisely what an "integrated social psychology" would look like. However, some general features can be discussed. An integrated social psychology would not be cross-cultural psychology, at least as the latter area currently exists. I see cross-cultural psychology as a go-between, not a goal for social psychology. An integrated social psychology would develop theories of broad scope with explicitly formulated "hooks" to society and culture (e.g., Triandis, this volume). Whereas it might investigate many of the current social and interpersonal phenomena, it would do so in a manner that recognizes and assesses the broadest possible set of variables that determine these phenomena historically and contemporaneously. Pepitone (1976, 1981) has suggested three families of variables, in addition to individual-oriented
psychology, that social psychology should incorporate in its theorizing: sociocultural, ecological, and biological.

**Structural Symbolic Interactionism**

By "structural symbolic interactionism" I refer to Sheldon Stryker's (1980, 1985) social structural version of symbolic interactionism. In this theoretical synthesis he attempts to combine what he views as the best of classic symbolic interactionism (Blumer, 1969) and of role theory (Biddle, 1979). As I interpret Stryker's theory, he seeks to account for both the "improvisational" and the "impositional" natures of human social behavior. Symbolic interactionism emphasizes the improvisational aspect of behavior—spontaneous, volitional, and undetermined—and recognizes the constraints society places on this behavior through the mechanisms of the socially-constructed self. Although symbolic interactionism and psychological social psychology differ in the former's emphasis on free will, social interaction, and societal influences, the approaches are not too far apart in their attention to individual actors as the immediate and interesting source of behavior. 4

Role theory presents the impositional view of human behavior. A variety of flavors of role theory have been developed in the last century (cf. Biddle, 1986), all of which have in common an attempt to describe and understand behavior from a "top-down" point of view. Persons are located within a matrix of social positions that are created, for the most part, by the social system, and behavior is regulated by the expectations society (i.e., individuals in other social positions) places on people in positions. House (1977) locates role theory within the "psychological sociology" version of social psychology, thereby emphasizing role theory's intermittent interest in the relationship between social positions and personality.

I suspect psychological social psychology's aversion to role theory is due in part to its seemingly static nature. By viewing people as virtual automatons in an incredibly complex machinery of interacting social positions, little is left for a social psychology of the individual.

Of course, behavior may indeed be best explained by structural considerations (Pepitone, 1976, 1981; Triandis, 1975), and psychological social psychology may be working with only residual variation. On the other hand, this picture of role theory is incomplete since it is the cognitive and affective processes of individuals that link social structural role positions with people's actual behavior, and these processes are subject to traditional social psychological analysis. Biddle (1979) presents such an analysis, attempting to demonstrate how the existing theory and research of both the sociological and the psychological social psychologies contribute to an understanding of role theory.

The strength of Stryker's theory is in attempting to account for both the regularity and the diversity of social behavior, or what the psychological anthropologist Wallace (1970) terms the "replication of uniformity" and "organization of diversity" approaches to understanding personality and culture. Pepitone's (1976) call for a more normative social psychology— one that takes account of the stable norms and social constraints on social behavior—echoes Stryker's position. An integrated social psychology might adopt Stryker's general approach to incorporating individual and sociocultural variables, possibly substituting its own motivational conceptualizations for those of symbolic interactionism.

**Ecological Approaches**

As I interpret them, ecological or materialist approaches to behavior share four emphases or principles: (1) objects and events exist and affect behavior and culture both independently and in conjunction with their subjective or phenomenological representations; (2) humans are essentially rational; (3) the objective environment presents rational humans with contingencies to which (4) their behaviors and cultural institutions are more-or-less rational adaptations (Harris, 1979; LeVine, 1973; McArthur & Baron, 1983). An integrated social psychology must look beyond the relationship between individual behavior and sociocultural variables to the ecological or material conditions underlying society and culture on the one hand, and social settings or situations on the other. Pointing again to its
broker function, ecological approaches are not new to cross-cultural psychology. Many cross-cultural psychologists have explicitly adopted models developed from Whiting (Whiting & Whiting, 1975) that follow a materialist logic yet de-emphasize the Whiting/Kardiner "projective system" (e.g., Berry, 1976; Yang, 1981). The strongest ecological statements at present come from anthropology, although social psychology has begun to show some interest in the approach.

**Cultural materialism.** The Whiting and cross-cultural ecological models have much in common with the theorizing of the brilliant and controversial anthropologist Marvin Harris. Harris' (1968, 1979) theory of Cultural Materialism is a positivist, non-dialectical materialism derived for the most part from the sociologist Marx and the anthropologist Leslie White (White, 1959). More a strategy or approach than a formal theory, Harris seeks to demystify cultural practices by demonstrating their origin in structural or infrastructural conditions. It is through demystification that an approach such as Harris' can aid social psychology. Social psychology's location of the source of behavior within the individual and its inattention to the normative or social structures within which behavior occurs contributes to what Harris labels "cognitive idealism" and LeVine (1973) terms the "psychological reductionist" school of culture and personality. In misplacing the ultimate source of behavior, cognitive idealism has serious implications for applied psychology, particularly clinical, as it encourages holding people rather than social, cultural, political, and economic conditions responsible for their problems. Likewise, Sampson (1981), taking more a materialist than a dialectical approach, points out how American cognitive psychology has adopted a cognitive idealist position and, to the extent that it is accepted as scientific truth within the discipline and by the lay public, can be viewed as a form of ideology through its rationalization of the status quo.

**Ecology in social psychology.** McArthur and Baron's (1983) ecological theory of social perception may stand as a landmark in bringing ecological thinking (back) into social psychology. Their concern is with the ecological basis of the behavior of individuals, in contrast to Harris' emphasis on the development of social institutions. Of particular interest is their analysis of perceptual error, in which they point out the inherent rationality and adaptability of seemingly erroneous judgments. It is too soon to determine, however, whether their pioneering work will have an impact on mainstream social psychology.

**Dialectics, Values, and Alternatives**

An objection to psychological social psychology's "getting involved" with social science might be that sociological social psychology is anti-positivistic or that the social sciences are bogged down in irreconcilable epistemological conflicts originating in value biases rather than scientific methods. However, as many social psychologists have recently pointed out, these same issues have now come social psychology's way. A fairly comprehensive discussion of these problems can be found in Fiske and Shweder's (1986) *Metatheory in social science*, an excellent volume that illustrates the variety of positions that can be taken. I believe that the only alternative for an integrated social psychology is the moderate position taken by Harris (1979), Spence (1985), Jahoda (1986) and others that recognizes the problem of value biases but rejects radical relativism and dialectics. Harris (1979) takes a "strongly moderate" position, pointing out the superiority of Western science, the advantage of etic analysis, and the deleterious effects dialectical philosophy has had on materialism (i.e., Marxist-Leninism).

We must recognize that there are many ways of knowing, but we must also recognize that it is not mere ethnocentric puffery to assert that science is a way of knowing that has a unique transcendent value for all human beings. (p. 27)

Harris dismisses Hegelian dialectics as mysticism: "Most of Hegel's philosophy is a worthless ruin..." (1968, p. 67), but accepts the general tone of dialectical thought:

It is important to draw a distinction between dialectics as a rigorous
means of obtaining knowledge— as an epistemological principle— and dialectics as a general attitude or stance toward knowledge. ... Dialectics viewed as an epistemology of skepticism, transience, ephemerality, and novelty has much to commend it. In the hands of some advocates, dialectics is virtually synonymous with the intelligent, skeptical, and creative search for probable knowledge. (pp. 147-148)

Harris asks the obvious question concerning Western science: "what are the alternatives?" Like Harris, I have yet to see an alternative that preserves the goals of a universal, etic social science.

**Antithesis: Little Will Change**

I would like to point out several reasons why I believe that journals articles, chapters and books such as this one will have little impact on social psychology. I will discuss several somewhat complementary reasons for expecting this lack of efficacy on our part: cultural, material, disciplinary, and cognitive.

**Cultural Barriers**

Psychological social psychology can be viewed both as a subculture that differs ideologically from other subcultures within psychology and as a culture, along with psychology as a whole, that differs both ideologically and institutionally from the cultures of the social sciences. Ideologically, differences in values, interests, and perhaps even affective responses stand between psychological social psychology and social science. Some of these same ideological differences have emerged within psychology, whereas others are more apt to be found between psychology and social science. Institutionally, psychological social psychology differs from the social sciences in the kinds of contingencies placed on scholarly work; I discuss this level in a later section.

**Subcultures.** Several observers of modern psychology have suggested that two or more cultures have developed within the discipline (Kenrick, 1986; Kimble, 1984; Rosenberg & Gara, 1983). Kimble (1984) demonstrated that members of APA Division 3 (Experimental) differ from members of Divisions 29 (Psychotherapy) and 32 (Humanistic) in emphasis on scientific versus humanistic values. Division 9 (Society for the Psychological Study of Social Issues) members fall in between these two camps and tend to be more variable than Divisions 3 and 32. Rosenberg and Gara’s (1983) study of APA Division 8 (The Society of Personality and Social Psychology) Fellows’ perceptions of seminal figures in their area revealed that these figures were seen to differ for the most part on two dimensions: synthetic versus analytic (i.e., holistic versus elementaristic) approach to theory development and emphasis on external versus internal determinants of behavior. Although psychological social psychology was located in the analytic/external quadrant, a clear difference could be observed between the highly analytic social psychologists (e.g., Festinger, Schachter, Berkowitz) and the relatively more synthetic (and older) individuals (G. Allport, Lewin, and Heider). Sociological social psychologists (Mead and Cooley) were viewed as still more synthetic than the latter group, and were the only individuals in the particularly interesting synthetic/external quadrant— the quadrant into which an integrated social psychology would extend. This empirically-generated picture of the field corresponds closely to Hogan and Emler’s (1978) comments and their description of Leon Festinger’s career transitions from an early interest in interpersonal processes to a later concern with the intrapsychic processes of cognitive dissonance.

Taken together, the above studies point to disagreement within psychology as to what the appropriate scope of theory-building, unit of analysis, and methodology should be. These paradigmatic differences are subcultural rather than cultural since, as Kimble (1984) points out, a certain amount of overlap still exists between the camps.

**Culture.** The cultural divide that is more problematic for an integrated social psychology is between psychology and the social sciences. I suggest that, analogous to scientific
paradigms, members of these two scientific cultures tend to talk past each other, and as with human cultures, they tend to devalue each other's behaviors and perhaps even find them distasteful (see also Clark, 1987). They extract different meanings from identical social phenomena, find different phenomena important and worthy of research effort, differ in their reliance on empirical research, find different kinds of data illuminating, and have adopted divergent styles by which to present their theory and research findings. Compare, for example, the contents of social psychology's premier experimental journal, the *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology (JESP)*, with a cross-cultural psychology journal, the *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology (JCCP)*, and its counterpart in psychological anthropology, *Ethos*. A prototypical paper in JESP might be "The role of goal categories in person impression" (Trzebinski & Richards, 1986); in Ethos "Mother-son intimacy and the dual view of woman in Andalusia: Analysis through oral poetry" (Gilmore, 1986). I believe these titles aptly illustrate the differing topical and methodological values of these two psychologies. As Bourguignon (1979), Jahoda (1982) and others have suggested, cross-cultural psychology is topically similar to psychological anthropology but methodologically similar to psychology, as a reasonably prototypical JCCP paper illustrates, "Maternal and infant behavior in Japan and America: A partial replication" (Otaki, 1986).

The disciplinary roots of this cultural divide may lie in circumstances external to the disciplines themselves, as discussed below. At an individual level, they probably lie in both a self-selection process (Sampson, 1978) and in the occupational socialization that occurs during graduate training. As the history of interethnic relations has taught us, this cultural divide can be overcome slowly at best, and may be a function of other material and institutional conditions.

**Reward Structures**

An integrated social psychology, were it to flourish, would require more careful theoretical work on the one hand, and research in a variety of settings with many types of participants on the other. Present reward contingencies, particularly publication pressures, at both the pre-doctoral and pre-tenure career phases impede both theory development (Carlson, 1984; Wachtel, 1980) and constrain the kinds of phenomena we can study (Hogan & Emler, 1978; Sears, 1986). The effects of these contingencies on the development of cross-cultural psychology, where research is difficult to perform, are easy to see. Levine (1984) vividly, and with a sense of humor often associated with hindsight, describes some of the difficulties he experienced in his pace-of-life research (Levine & Bartlett, 1984). Cross-cultural studies take years to set up and perform, and a variety of pitfalls not encountered in social psychology must be avoided.

Some problems:

1. **Methodological quagmires.** One of these is the "equivalence problem" (cf. Brislin, Lonner & Thorndike, 1973). One can never be sure if any manipulation, measure, action, or even single word are quite the same across cultural or linguistic samples.

2. **Social dilemmas.** The hazards of the collaborative nature of cross-cultural work can be seen in a Portuguese phrase introduced by Levine (1984), *noa tem problema* (no problem). Collecting data for an overseas colleague is *noa tem problema*. Doing it correctly is of course *noa tem problema*. On time? *Noa tem problema*!

3. **Personal crises.** Whereas laboratory work in social psychology is performed in considerable comfort, often by apprentices, overseas research can be highly stressful, if not necessarily a cause for culture shock. The booze is getting better in many parts of the world (Doob, 1980), but contributes far less to cross-cultural research than drugs such as *Lomotil.*

A colleague remarked to me at a cross-cultural conference several years ago that the participants were mainly senior academicians. Untenured assistant professors cannot afford the slow pace of cross-cultural research when
they must compete with faculty who publish several refereed papers each year.

Pioneers in a changing social psychology would also encounter the funding problem faced by cross-cultural psychologists. Although cross-cultural research is expensive, neither social science nor behavioral science agencies are likely to fund projects that fall in-between, outside of the mainstreams of each area.

In addition to these material contingencies, social contingencies may also make it difficult for an integrated social psychology to develop in psychology departments. Pepitone (1981) outlined what he believes are the prevailing values of psychologists (see above). For a research psychologist to be at variance with these values can be a difficult situation since such deviance may limit both material (e.g., tenure decisions) and social (e.g., approval) rewards.6

**Disciplinary Considerations**

An integrated social psychology would be much broader than present psychological social psychology in two ways: it would take into account the work of other disciplines, and it would work with a wider range of social phenomena. The informational overload that interdisciplinary awareness might produce is considerable.

An integrated social psychology would be much broader than present psychological social psychology in two ways: it would take into account the work of other disciplines, and it would work with a wider range of social phenomena. The informational overload that interdisciplinary awareness might produce can be illustrated by counting the number of different journals cited in the reference sections of the psychology and social science journals included in the citation survey reported above (with some additions).7 If a researcher reads only mainstream social psychology (JPSP:Groups, JPSP:Social Cognition, Journal of Experimental Social Psychology, Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin in this study), he or she will find that about 13 different journals are cited on average at least once every other article. If this reading list is expanded to include three journals that can be viewed as occupying a borderline position, JCCP, Ethos, and Social Psychology Quarterly, the researcher will find that about 22 journals are cited at this frequency. Reading American Anthropologist and American Sociological Review expands this set to about 31 journals. Altogether, an amazing 593 different journals were cited at least once by the eight journals examined. Although there are many ways of performing these calculations, the pattern indicates a considerable increase in the number of journals that would be viewed as part of active researchers’ required reading or scanning as they expand their horizons.

Psychological social psychology is already a large subdiscipline in which few social psychologists read outside their own interest areas. Informal or semi-formal networks (sometimes termed “mutual admiration societies”) are common, and may be viewed as incipient subdisciplines. I suspect social psychology has reached the limit of its grown as a single subdiscipline of psychology, and would fly apart if more breadth were asked of it.

The fractionation of social psychology runs counter to what I hope to see, and may be avoided in two ways. First, the kind of theorizing that would be performed might help reduce the amount of information to be handled by placing it within encompassing theoretical interpretations. Phenomena and lines of research might be found to be similar and interchangeable. For example, at a mid-range level of theorizing within social psychology, Fishbein and Ajzen’s (1975) analysis of attitudes provided an overarching conceptualization that reduced the complexity and disorganization of the area. At a higher level of analysis, Harris (1979) has attempted to apply his cultural materialist approach to making sense of a variety of otherwise disparate and irreconcilable social and psychological phenomena. The challenge to grand theory, of course, is to keep all levels of analysis, from individual to sociocultural, in equal focus.

A technological fix to the fractionation problem might be available in the form of computer technology that allows researchers to easily access a large amount of information.
throughout the social and behavioral sciences from their desktops. The CD-ROM (a laser disk storage medium), with its immense capacity, is a current example of such a technology, and is currently being used to store the Psychological Abstracts database (12 years of abstracts on 2 disks; American Psychological Association, 1986). The CD-ROM type of technology may be for social science theory what mainframe computers and statistical packages were for empirical research. While it is true that desktop access to hundreds of journals in dozens of languages would in itself produce a massive overload, analogous to the mound of computer printouts that every data analysis seems to build, I expect that we will learn to sift through this information as efficiently as we have learned to excavate our mounds of printouts. Grand theory and careful synthesis would also help. The imbalance of "activity at the expense of thought" (Wachtel, 1980, p. 399) brought on in part, I suspect, by the trivially simple analysis of complex data made possible by the technological innovations of the 1960s may be re-dressed by trivially simple access to a world of ideas made possible by the technological innovations of the 1980s.

Problems of communication among social scientists who speak different languages would also stand between social psychology and integration, particularly the incorporation of ideas from other culturally indigenous psychologies (Berry, 1978). Smith (1978) has noted the decline of language requirements in graduate schools; this trend has yet to reverse. The experience of cross-cultural psychology is instructive here, in that the best research is collaborative and requires the interaction of individuals with a bewildering variety of linguistic backgrounds (e.g., the Chinese Culture Connection, 1987). However, psychologists who do not speak the universal language of cross-cultural psychology—English—rarely come to the attention of the discipline.

Materialism and Disciplinary Development

The materialist or economic approach (e.g., Harris) can be used to understand changes in interests, methods, and theoretical approaches in scientific disciplines and their subdisciplines. Some analyses of psychology are consistent with a materialist approach. House (1977) pointed out the relationships between the theoretical approaches of sociology, sociological social psychology, and psychological social psychology and their competing positions within academia during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Sarason (1981) outlined how events following World War II shaped modern clinical psychology, and E. Jones (1985) traced modern social psychology to events associated with the war. Finison (1986) argued that the Society for the Psychological Study of Social Issues was born of the Depression. Likewise, greater tolerance of intermarriage, easier travel, changes in immigration laws, historical events, and communication technology are influencing cross-cultural psychology from the outside that are not under our control.

This analysis suggests that the major change in social psychology advocated here will not occur without appropriate societal or personal events. For example, Cole (1984) suggested that little change will occur in psychology's cultural insularity "until events force even more attention to be paid to the international sphere as a source of important social knowledge." (p. 1001). These events seem to be shaping and energizing cross-cultural psychology; the extent to which they and unforeseen others contribute to an integrated social psychology is yet to be seen.

Cognitive Ecology

As material conditions affect the development of scientific disciplines, the "cognitive ecology" of scientists may influence their overall perspectives on their craft. By "cognitive ecology" I mean the day-to-day intellectual work environment in which scientists develop hypotheses and plan, implement, and interpret their research. The reward structure, both material and social, experienced by social psychologists promotes narrowly-defined research programs that produce short-term studies employing readily available respondents. This situation in turn presents social psychologists with a cognitive ecology that includes intense attention to the fine details of
laboratory manipulations and to the phenomenological experience of American Middle Class college sophomores.

There are two ways that this ecology may affect psychologists' perspectives. The rational, adaptive social psychologist must immerse him or herself in the narrow variability of lab and subject. Such allocation of finite cognitive resources to the minutiae of a research program precludes an active and ongoing consideration of larger sociocultural questions, leading the social psychologist to feel that these questions are the concern of a different discipline. The less-empirical, sociological social psychologists may have an advantage in being less concerned with the details of empirical research, and more at leisure to consider these broader issues.

The second effect of social psychologists' cognitive ecology is on what they find interesting, important, and personally relevant in their research. The scientist who focuses on human variation within a highly restricted range may come to find this variation interesting and relevant to daily life even if it had not been so at the outset. This attitude change may occur because (1) the researched variation is a subset of the restricted but personally relevant natural variation within which the scientist lives as a member of his or her society, (2) it becomes highly familiar, or (3) the scientist faces a difficult and stimulating challenge in trying to control and understand it. Although this effect of ecology on preferences is functional and adaptive in reconciling affect with required behavior (connoting a dissonance process or a value-socialization process [Parsons, 1951]), and certainly motivates the scientist to work hard, it is dysfunctional in severely limiting the scope of the theories he or she develops. Spence (1985) recognized the tendency of psychologists to get lost in their research:...psychologists have been overly prone to bury themselves in the data from laboratory and other contrived, constricted situations and to lose track of the broader questions that initially sent them there. The result may be bodies of data and theories spun around them that are relevant only to arcane laboratory paradigms and are ultimately sterile or trivial (p. 1286).

Reconciliation

Reconciling a deterministic view of the development of social psychology with the seemingly volitional attempt of a growing number of people to change the discipline is difficult, unless these attempts are themselves viewed, certainly unsatisfactorily, within the same determined system. Such a synthesis will not be attempted here. Harris' (1979) solution to this dilemma is to back away from absolute infrastructural or structural determinism, and suggest that superstructural elements such as ideology have effects on infrastructure and structure that serve to maintain the cultural system. He goes somewhat further in distinguishing between "system-maintaining" and "system-transforming" values, the former serving the status quo, the latter contributing to its alteration. System-transforming values originate in the contradictions of the system. For example, concerning U.S. poverty, "Material pauperization and exploitation breed not only apathy but also anger and revolutionary zeal" (p. 303).

Social psychology and social science have developed considerable contradictions since the brighter era of the 1950s and 1960s (Converse, 1986; Shweder & Fiske, 1986). My hope is that an awareness of the limitations of social psychology, along with an understanding of the powerful forces that have shaped it and that maintain its present state, will generate appropriate system-transforming values in response to these contradictions. Cross-cultural psychology may strengthen these values through its behavior as a culture broker and through direct agitation in volumes such as this one. Perhaps through these efforts an integrated social psychology will develop, and social psychology/ Mike Doonesbury will reach out to the other worlds with which it has heretofore had little knowledge and contact.
References


Footnotes

1. I would like to thank Bruce J. Biddle, Michael H. Bond, and Samuel Karson for reviewing earlier versions of this chapter. Errors, outrageous statements, and deficiencies that remain are my own.


3. Correlations presented here are based on a 17-category content analysis of the topical emphases of the cited journals.

4. It is unfortunate that the major influence of symbolic interactionism on psychological social psychology has been Goffman's (e.g., 1959) dramaturgical approach. Goffman's work, although brilliant in insight and presentation, represents an uncharacteristically individualistic (for symbolic interactionism) and rather sordid, one-sided view of humanity (Gouldner, 1970) that has been assimilated to some extent by psychological social psychology.

5. *Lomotil* is a narcotic-based anti-diarrheal drug.

6. The effects of psychological social psychology's values can be seen in the evolution of its journals, particularly APA Division 8's *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin* (PSPB). Begun in part as an outlet for "innovative," "unusual," or "different" papers than those found in other publication outlets (Hendrick, 1975; Pruitt, 1975), PSPB has gradually been assimilated to psychological social psychology's mainstream values and has become a "miniature JPSP" (although the editor denies this; see Rule, 1986).


8. Carrying this idea to its logical conclusion, the recent spate of criticisms of social psychology for its insularity and individualistic bias may be as much a consequence as a cause of the trend toward an integrated social psychology. This book– its existence, the fact that you have purchased it– may be yet another consequence.