REVIEW
of
PERSONALITY
and
SOCIAL
PSYCHOLOGY

Edited by
LADD WHEELER • PHILLIP SHAVER

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Editors' Introduction

It was fashionable a few years ago to agonize over the "crisis in social psychology." (A very similar soul-searching among personality psychologists—centering around the challenge to trait conceptions of personality—seems never to have received the "crisis" label.) The field had, it was argued, failed to produce either an intellectually powerful body of theory or an impressive social technology.

It was obvious from the start that the crisis wouldn't last long. Crises, by their nature, are either contained, resolved, or allowed to reach devastating proportions. For a while it seemed that social psychology's crisis would simply be contained; each year APA program committees welcomed a few hand-wringing crisis-oriented symposia and paper sessions. Several observers wryly noted that bemoaning the crisis would soon become a legitimate subdiscipline in its own right.

The papers in this volume, probably representive of the field as a whole in 1983, suggest a happier conclusion than either the crisis-mongers or their cynical debunkers anticipated. The first five deal with important social and political issues, and each exhibits a level of sophistication rare just a few years ago. Messick and Brewer, while writing in the tradition of gaming research, admit that much of that tradition is "more memorable for its volume than for its important discoveries." Through a combination of ingenious laboratory simulation studies and analyses of real-world resource-sharing dilemmas, Messick and Brewer demonstrate the value of gaming paradigms for understanding important social dilemmas such as the "tragedy of the

commons.'' Tetlock's chapter is an exploration of a similar multi-method approach to the study of psychological aspects of foreign policy. He makes a convincing case for the creative combination of insights from laboratory experiments and simulations, self-report questionnaires, case studies, expert ratings of policy makers' personal styles, and content analalyses of archival records. Both chapters reflect the triumph of commitment to significant subject matter over the kind of methodological narrowness and sterility that legitimately bothered "crisis" analysts.

In the third chapter, Sears discusses another question of general interest to psychologists and political analysts: Do political orientations such as liberalism and racism, first acquired during childhood and adolescence, persist into adulthood and old age? The answer appears to be yes, but yes qualified by the particular attitudes and values in question and the life stages during which people typically encounter attitude-discrepant information and influence attempts. Speaking of racism, the provocative paper by Jones argues that the concepts of race and racism have been diluted or neglected in social psychology to the point where few interesting studies are being published, especially in mainstream journals and textbooks. The reasons for this neglect are many, perhaps the most important being contemporary psychology's overemphasis on laboratory experments and its neglect of cultural factors of all kinds. If we are correct in observing that the field's emphasis is beginning to change, it is reasonable to hope that some of the deficiencies Jones points to will soon be remedied.

The chapter by Penrod and Borgida suggests that psycholegal research on the rules of evidence and procedure may very well contribute to a general understanding of lay inference. Whether legal rules, many of which presume to limit the robustness of various inferential shortcomings, constitute effective remedies has potentially interesting implications for social psychologists interested in judgment processes as well as for psychologists of the law.

Just as Jones reaches back to social psychology's early years, when race and culture were influential concepts, Lippa reconsiders Allport and Vernon's fascinating but long-neglected work on expressive styles. Recent work by Lippa and others indicates that certain forms of expressive behavior are temporally stable, as is personal *control* of

expressive behavior, operationalized by Snyder's self-monitoring scale. At the end of his paper Lippa argues that much of Allport and Vernon's research program has remained undeveloped for 50 years, a situation that can now be fruitfully remedied given today's concepts and methods. Two other aspects of what might be called self-psychology are explored in the chapters by Leahy and Brockner. Leahy questions the simplistic notion of "adaptation" taken for granted by many developmental psychologists. In a wide-ranging review of research and theory concerning social-cognitive development, identity crises, and depression, Leahy documents the dark side of development. Identity confusion and certain kinds of depression (caused by not living up to one's own standards) are made possible by cognitive sophistication. Brockner examines literature concerned with the influencability of people who have low self-esteem. Their lack of confidence, propensity for morbid self-consciousness, and negative evaluation of their own performances make them easy targets for manipulation. Brockner argus convincingly that a cognitively oriented analysis of low self-esteem can contribute to the design of therapeutic methods.

Although not saying so explicitly, Shotter and Burton represent still another response to the crisis, a response that, like Jones's and Lippa's, involves a return to fundamental sources and approaches. In an exposition of "descriptive formulation research," a kind of pre-empirical analysis of people's everyday accounts of human behavior, they highlight the related approaches of Heider, Smedslund, and Ossario. "Idealizations" resulting from these approaches are likened to Chomsky's "competence models" of language production and to pre-empirical conceptual work done by Galileo and Newton in physics. The authors contend that certain areas of social psychology will not progress to the stage of meaningful empirical research until the requisite pre-empirical analyses are carried out.

Finally, Smith reflects on ethical issues in personality-social psychology as these have been elucidated, not just by thoughtful philosophical analyses, but also by empirical research into the complexities of deception, informed consent, and debriefing. One aspect of the crisis seemed to be a feeling on the part of some critics that laboratory research in personality and social psychology was insufficiently humane. While it is true that subjects were frequently deceived for a period of time and occasionally placed under moderate stress—

procedures that should raise ethical questions—it is alas the case that some critics' ethical pronouncements were paternalistic, implying that subjects are too fragile or naive to make sensible judgments for themselves about entering into an alliance with scientists who are trying to understand human behavior.

It is a pleasure to contemplate these ten slices of current personality-social psychology. As a discipline we are contributing to the resolution of social dilemmas, the analysis of foreign policy, the identification of attitudinal and emotional concomitants of social-cognitive development, and the improvement of our court system. We are now more open than ever to data, methods, and problems from related fields: political science, economics, law, philosophy, life-span developmental and clinical psychology. Our analyses seem more firmly connected to social reality. Except for race, which may now begin to receive its due, the topics being investigated are receiving more mature treatment today than 10 years ago, a sign perhaps that the crisis was—in terms borrowed from Leahy's chapter—the dark side of an important developmental transition. If so, we will now be confronted, not with intellectual nirvana, but with the difficult challenges of scientific adulthood.

In addition to the members of the editorial board, the following individuals generously gave their time to reviewing manuscripts: Judith Smetana, Robert Keegan, and Richard Niemi. Carolyn Sherif, who died during 1982, made important contributions to the first three volumes of the *Review*. She was one of the best and brightest of us all, and we cherish our memories of her.

—Ladd Wheeler
Phillip Shaver

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Solving Social Dilemmas

A REVIEW

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Garrett Hardin analyzed the parable, "The Tragedy of the Commons," in his very important article (1968). The parable describes a situation in which a number of herdsmen graze their herds on a common pasturage. Each herdsman is aware that it is to his benefit to increase the size of his herd because, while each of his animals represents potential profit to him, the cost of grazing the animal, measured as the damage done to the common pasturage, is shared by

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all of the herdsmen. Responding to this incentive, each herdsman rationally decides to increase his herd size and, as this happens, the quality of the commons deteriorates. The carrying capacity of the commons is exceeded and as the process continues, which it is likely to do because no individual herdsman will find it beneficial to unilaterally reduce the size of his herd, it approaches its tragic conclusion, the collapse of the commons and the ultimate destruction of the herds that grazed on it.

Hardin's parable is a story about a form of social interdependence in which the collective consequence of reasonable individual choices is disaster. Scientists in a variety of disciplines have read lessons from this parable that pertain to population control (Baden, 1977), political organization (Orbell & Wilson, 1978), the economics of public goods (Olson, 1965; Samuelson, 1954), and the arrangement of reinforcement contingencies (Platt, 1973). Economists, political scientists, sociologists, and biologists, as well as social psychologists, have seen issues in this simple tale that are of central importance in their respective disciplines. Excellent books by Cross and Guyer (1980), Schelling (1978), and Hardin and Baden (1977) describe a wide range of social phenomena to which the tragedy of the commons relates. Arrow's (1963) important book is also relevant. Reviews highlighting psychological dimensions of the problem have been written by Dawes (1980), Dawes and Orbell (1981), Edney and Harper (1978), Edney (1980, 1981), and Stroebe and Frey (1982).

This review will be organized into four sections. In the first we will propose a classification of social (and individual) traps or dilemmas. In the second section we will briefly review the research paradigms that have been used to study experimentally the various types of social dilemmas. The third section is the review of research findings, the heart of the chapter. We conclude by offering some advice on the difference between more and less fruitful research in this area.

SOCIAL TRAPS

Cross and Guyer (1980) and Platt (1973) view the tragedy of the commons as a special type of *social trap*. Social traps are peculiar arrangements of rewards and punishments in which behaviors that are gratifying for the individual in the short term, imply long-term punishments for the individual and for others as well. We are lured into the trap by our short-term self-interest, ignoring the long-term collective costs; the trap is sprung when the future collective costs must be paid. A *social fence* or *countertrap* exists when the short-term aversive consequences of an act deter us from performing the act

and when the act would produce long-term positive benefits both to ourselves and to others if performed. The immediate, personal negatives prevent us from providing long-term positives.

There are three distinctions that we believe to be essential in Cross and Guyer's (1980) discussion of social traps. The first is the distinction between social traps and fences that is outlined in the preceding paragraph. The second distinction is whether the trap (or fence) is a one-person situation or a situation, such as the tragedy of the commons, in which more than one person is involved. The final distinction concerns the importance of the temporal disjunction between the positive and negative consequences. In some cases, the essence of the trap is that the negative consequence of a behavior is delayed while the positive consequence is immediate; in other situations, the trap can be sprung with no delay whatsoever.

These three distinctions lead to the three-dimensional classification of social traps that is presented in Table 1.1. While our focus in this article is on social dilemmas, the four prototypical collective traps on the right of Table 1.1, it will be useful as a contrast to examine briefly one-person or individual traps.

Individual Traps

The first of these (cell 1 in the table) is the rather common one in which we do things for immediate positive gain, but which are likely to cause disagreeable future outcomes. The sweetness of a banana split is immediate; the fatness it causes comes later. The pleasure of smoking tobacco is immediate; the increased rate of heart disease and lung cancer is the bill that must be paid down the road. Hangovers follow binges, although medication that produces nausea when combined with alcohol tends to move the aversive properties of alcohol ingestion forward in time to make them more nearly coincident with the positive "buzz" that alcohol produces. This type of treatment shifts the trap from the first to the third cell in Table 1.1.

There are many traps in which we do things for a positive consequence but confront immediate negative outcomes (cell 3). Reckless driving can be thrilling but it can also be harmful, and the harm will be immediate. Individual no-delay traps have a self-eliminating quality if the behaviors have sufficiently unpleasant consequences. Time delay traps, on the other hand, do not have this property. By the time the smoker gets lung cancer (that is to say, experiences the negative consequence), it is too late. Hangovers, which are not as delayed as lung cancer, still may not follow the act of drinking closely enough to significantly influence its frequency. So, while nondelay traps have a built-in corrective, delayed traps have less.

TABLE 1.1
A Three-Dimensional Classification of Social Traps

| | Individual | | Collective | |
	Delay	No Delay	Delay	No Delay
Trap	1	3	5	7
Fence	2	4	6	8

Fences (cells 2 and 4) refer to situations in which a behavior is avoided, which if it had not been, could have produced positive future outcomes. Students who avoid studying do not score as high as they could on later exams, and people who avoid the dentist must eventually see him, often at a greater cost of dollars and pain than if they had seen him regularly. A university faculty member may forgo a future promotion by failing to face the aversive job of writing up research results.

Not all fences have delayed consequences. Fear often deters us from doing things that, if done, would have immediate positive consequences. Many people will never savor the delicacy of snails or of caviar because the idea of eating such things is revolting to them. Many young people never discover the joy of reading because they believe that it will be boring. When we do not go skiing with friends because we think it will be too hard or when we stay away from an entertaining play because we think it will be dull, we're being controlled by fences. Phobias, of course, are the Great Walls of individual fences.

Individual fences are rendered even more difficult to solve than individual traps because if the behavior does not occur, there is no opportunity to learn of the positive consequences. Fences, therefore, even undelayed ones, tend to have a self-perpetuating rather than a self-correcting quality.

Collective Traps

Collective traps are defined somewhat differently from one-person traps. Implicit in the notion of traps and counter-traps is the principle

that a behavior or choice has at least two different consequences, one positive and one negative. In time-delay or temporal traps, these consequences are differentially distributed through time; in nondelay traps these two consequencs are differentially attended to. In *collective traps,* the positive and negative consequences are differentially distributed across members of a group. In traps, in contrast to fences, an individual has an inducement to take an action that results in a positive consequence for him or her but which also has negative consequences for others. This arrangement is reversed in collective fences; the individual is deterred from taking an action that would be personally costly but that would be beneficial to others.

We need to narrow our focus at this point because there are many situations having these characteristics that we will ignore in this review. It is necessary to distinguish between symmetric and asymmetric situations. In symmetric situations, we do not distinguish among the participants; the incentive structure is identical for each of them, as in the tragedy of the commons. In asymmetric situations, the participants have different preferences or incentive structures. If one person gags because of another's cigar smoke, the two clearly do not have identical preferences, although this situation would qualify as a collective trap in that the behavior one person finds rewarding, another finds repulsive. These asymmetric situations are called *externality traps* by Cross and Guyer (1980).

Symmetric collective traps or *social dilemas* are characterized by the existence of identical incentive structures for all participants and by the fact that when the participants all respond to their individual incentives, disregarding the social consequences, all the participants are worse off than if they ignored their individual incentives. The consequence of each herdsman increasing the size of his herd is that these same herdsmen are made worse off. Thus, the two essential qualities of social dilemmas are that (1) each person has an individually rational choice that, when made by all members of the group, (2) provides a poorer outcome than that which the members would have received if no members made the rational choice.

Social dilemmas, like one-person traps, can have immediate or delayed outcomes, and they can be traps or fences. A social dilemma trap is a situation, like the tragedy of the commons, in which the individually rational choice is to do something, which, when done by all, leads to individual and collective disaster. A collective fence, however, is characterized by an incentive not to do something which, when not done by any, or when done by too few people, results in a poorer state of affairs than if everyone had done it. Cross and Guyer (1980) give an example of such a situation when they describe the

thinking of a prototypical citizen considering whether to shovel the snow from his or her sidewalk after a blizzard. All the citizens realize that if they alone shoveled the snow from their sidewalks, the situation would not be improved since their neighbors' sidewalks would still be unnavigable. As a result, none of the residents shovel their snow and all of them remain trapped (literally) in their houses. The consequences of not shoveling (and of shoveling) are pretty much immediate, making this an example of a no-delay collective fence (cell 8 in Table 1.1).

The problem of public goods, long noted in the literature of economics (e.g., Samuelson, 1954; Olson, 1965), is a classic collective fence.[1] The problem is this: If a good is going to be made available to anyone who chooses to use it, then what incentive does one have to pay to establish the good? The answer generally given is that the incentive is too weak for the good to be provided (Brubaker, 1975) or for it to be provided at an optimal level (Samuelson, 1954). Public television is a public good: If a community has public television, anyone can enjoy the benefit without paying the cost. If public television depended exclusively on voluntary donations, it would have failed long ago. Why should we pay for public TV? Unlike films in theaters, we don't need to pay to enjoy. The success of a local station, moreover, will not depend on one person's donation. Although we would prefer to have public TV and lose the donation than to have the donation and lose public TV, the cost isn't worth it. However, when everyone decides that the cost is not worth it, we obtain our less preferred outcome of keeping our money and losing the station. This is not the consequence of a single person's decision, but the consequence of a multitude of such decisions. The fact that the collective consequence would be remote in time, a delayed consequence, further blurs the connection between our individual choices and the collective outcome. Those who enjoy the public good without paying the cost are referred to as *free riders*. Stroebe and Frey (1982) have reviewed a number of studies from economics and psychology bearing on free riding and the provision of public goods.

In collective traps the collective problems arise from what people do, not from what they fail to do. The traffic jams that we endure at 7:30 a.m. and 5:30 p.m. arise because we (and thousands like us) like to arrive at our offices at 8:00 a.m. and to leave around 5:00 p.m. Unlike the consequences in the tragedy of the commons, the results of our choice of departure times are immediate and maddeningly predictable. We may squander fossil fuels by driving alone rather than car pooling, or by driving faster rather than slower, or by maintaining our homes too hot in winter or too cold in summer, without worrying