Introduction to the Special Issue: Integrating Personality and Social Psychology

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Some 50 years ago, in 1937, Gordon Allport published *Personality: A Psychological Interpretation*. Much in the manner of his brother Floyd's *Social Psychology* of 1924, Gordon Allport's book served as a seminal text and promoted the development of courses on personality within academic departments of psychology. At the same time, however, Allport vigorously argued for the independence of personality from social psychology. Over the ensuing half century, personality and social psychologists have often seemed to work in ignorance of each other's work—even at cross-purposes. This unfortunate situation is partly reflected in the vigorous response to Mischel's (1968) critique of traditional trait and psychodynamic approaches to personality, as well as the repeated debates over the organization of Division 8 of the American Psychological Association (otherwise known as the Society for Personality and Social Psychology) and jurisdiction over the *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology (JPSP)*.

At the same time a number of investigators, and not just in the post-1968 cohort, have attempted to transcend what has often seemed to be a fruitless person–situation debate. Working steadily and in many cases without even referring explicitly to longstanding disputes, these researchers and theorists have attempted to integrate the concerns, concepts, principles, and paradigms of personality and social psychology. The intended goal, regardless of whether it has been explicitly stated, has been the development of a fuller view of the individual in his or her social context.

Such articles have appeared in the pages of *JPSP* for a long time. However, it seemed to the current editors that the time was right for publication of a Special Issue that would gather in one place a number of exemplars of this integrative activity. The purpose of this Special Issue is not to mark one approach as superior to others but rather to present a wide variety of approaches to the problem of integrating personality and social psychology. This introductory essay seeks to underscore some of the integrative aspects of the articles collected here and to help point the direction for future activity along the same lines.

The Special Issue was conceived by the editors of the several sections of *JPSP*: Attitudes and Social Cognition, Intergroup Relations and Group Processes, and Personality Processes and Individual Differences. Readers of *JPSP* were invited to submit proposals for the Special Issue in the form of abstracts. A total of 107 abstracts were processed by November 1, 1986 (some investigators submitted more than one abstract). In 85 cases the author was encouraged to submit a full article: A total of 70 actually did so.

Several of the published articles provide a social psychological perspective on topics traditionally within the domain of personality. For example, Prentice (1987) presents three studies showing that social attitudes and values have many of the qualities of personal possessions and that in some people at least, the three types of entities function together as coherent modes of personal expression. Similarly, Strauman and Higgins (1987) offer an interpersonal view of that most personal of psychological qualities—the self-concept. They argue that the self-concept represents others' views of oneself as well as one's own view of self and that the occurrence of discrepancies between these views can invoke feelings of guilt and depression.

Two other articles consider topics relating to intrinsic and extrinsic motivation and summarize entire programs of research. Harackiewicz, Abrahams, and Wageman (1987) show how achievement orientation combines with evaluative focus to mediate the effects of external rewards on subjects' interest in and enjoyment of an experimental task. They confirm that interest can be enhanced as well as undermined by performance evaluation, and their work leads to the development of a general model of competence motivation that takes into account both the personality of the subjects and the structure of the situation in which they are placed. From a rather different perspective, Deci and Ryan (1987) present a general model of intentionality and self-regulation. Their analysis suggests that the same conceptual dimension—autonomy versus control—may be applied to both persons and environments.

A substantial plurality of the articles deal with the relations between personality and dyadic interaction. Swann (1987) traces the evolution of his research from an early concern with expectancy confirmation processes, with a focus on the perceiver, to self-verification processes, with a focus on the target. Early work on self-fulfilling prophecies tended to ignore the fact that targets have expectancies about themselves that may interact with others' expectancies of them. The implication is that identities are not imposed on us by others, nor do they develop in a vacuum; rather, they emerge from a process of negotiation between the individual and other people. Jamieson, Lydon, and Zanna (1987) employ a personality variable, self-monitoring, to resolve a long-standing controversy about the relation between similarity and attraction: High self-monitors are attracted by similarities in preferred activities, whereas low self-monitors are attracted by similarities in social attitudes. Miller (1987) presents two studies that show that empathic embarrassment is determined both by the relationship between the (embarrassed) actor and the (empathic) observer and by the observer's own tendency to be embarrassed. Finally, Bornstein, Leone, and Galley (1987) extend earlier work on nonconscious influences on social perception (a prominent topic in psychodynamic theories of personality) by showing that subliminal mere exposure to photographs has observable effects on later interactions with the people pictured.

Several articles go beyond dyadic relationships to consider the relations between the individual and the group. These articles illustrate an emerging trend for experimental social psychologists to incorporate individual difference measures in their studies. McGraw and Bloomfield (1987) show that two personality variables—level of moral reasoning and gender role orientation—combine to determine the influence of an individual on a group decision-making task. The implication is that the match between personality and features of the decision is critical to determining the degree of social impact. Shifting attention from those who influence others to those who are influenced by them, Maslach, Santee, and Wade (1987) produce a surprising result: Personality variables (gender role and deindividuation) predict conformity under conditions of strong, but not weak, peer pressure. Stein, Newcomb, and Bentler (1987) report a longitudinal study of more than 600 adolescents, extending over a period of 8 years. The results support an interactive, developmental model that considers both the individual's degree of social conformity and the kinds of role models to which the person has been exposed.

Marriages and families provide another popular medium for studying personal and environmental factors involved in social interaction. Fincham and Bradbury (1987) present two studies—one of mothers and their children, the other of husbands and wives—that illustrate the role played by participants' causal attributions concerning conflict and by their feelings of self-efficacy concerning its resolution. Howe (1987) makes a set of related points in research on observers' perceptions of marital conflict. His findings indicate that the intuitive psychologist, unless specifically instructed otherwise, tends to be an interactionist, if not a reciprocal determinist. Schaefer and Burnett (1987) present a longitudinal study of women's perceptions of their husbands. The perceived quality of the marriage at the outset predicted demoralization 3 years later, suggesting the operation of a vicious cycle. Vinokur, Schul, and Caplan (1987) offer another longitudinal study of marital interactions, focusing on perceived social support. They find that perceived support is most strongly determined by actual transactions between partners but that personal factors such as a negative outlook also make a tangible contribution to the final result.

Two studies of aggression and misbehavior in children and adolescents complement the

studies of marriage. Dodge and Coie (1987) turn to principles of social cognition to understand aggressive behavior in children's peer groups. They show that reactive, but not proactive, aggression is a function of the child's tendency to attribute hostile intent to others, as well as a bias to interpret accidental provocations as deliberate. Wright and Mischel (1987) employ a study of behavior-disordered children to illustrate a new approach to the analysis of personality dispositions. Although aggression and withdrawal varied considerably across situations, observers' dispositional judgments were found to be sensitive to the context in which trait-relevant behavior was displayed and to predict behavior best in those situations that were stressful and demanding.

Although many studies of personality and social interaction are longitudinal, very few take a life-span perspective or pay significant attention to the impact of larger social structures. Cantor, Norem, Niedenthal, Langston, and Brower (1987) propose to integrate personality and social psychology by studying how individuals approach the major tasks they face when they make the transition from one phase of life to another. As an example of their approach, they show how personality constructs such as the self-concept and defensive pessimism shape the response of college freshmen to the pressures placed on them by their new environments. Ryff (1987) argues forcefully and convincingly for a revival of interest in personality and social structure—a central domain for any analysis of the effect of the environment on the person. Caspi (1987) takes up the same theme from a life-span developmental perspective, proposing that more attention be paid to the age-graded role paths that individuals in each culture follow, as well as the age-relevant situations in which these roles are enacted. Taken together, these articles call for a definition of the environment that is broader than the conventional characterization in terms of the local context in which behavior takes place.

The Special Issue concludes with two conceptual articles that take up many of the themes raised in the contributions that went before. Buss (1987) takes up the question of how individuals act through their behavior to affect the environments that they inhabit: by choosing to enter or avoid certain contexts, by adventitiously eliciting certain behaviors from the other people that they encounter therein, and by deliberately altering the behavior of other people. Baron and Boudreau (1987) import the concepts and principles of the ecological perspective in the study of perception to the analysis of the person-by-situation interaction. In their view, attempts to integrate personality and social psychology have paid too much attention to the actor's mental representation of the world and too little attention to the actual structure of the environment and the behavioral possibilities it affords.

Despite the intensity of the person–situation debate and concerns about social-cognitive imperialism, it is clear from the contents of this Special Issue that the task of integrating personality and social psychology is now proceeding on a much broader base. Social psychologists are increasingly examining the role of individual differences in moderating the outcomes of interpersonal interactions, and personality psychologists are taking increasing notice of the effects of the environment outside the individual. Although research on person-by-situation interactions retains a heavy cognitive flavor, there remains considerable room for traditional sorts of personality variables as well. Although most research continues to employ the one-step designs and unidirectional models of causality dictated by conventional statistical methods, there is an increasing body of literature that allows social interactions to go through one or more complete cycles and that incorporates notions of reciprocal causation.

As shown by this Special Issue, the task of integration is a pluralistic one, involving personologists and social psychologists, developmentalists, and clinicians. If the articles collected herein do no more than illustrate the wide variety of approaches that constitute the integrative enterprise and enable more psychologists to see that they are part of it, the Special Issue will have served an important purpose. One can hardly wait to see what *JPSP* will be like 50 years hence.

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