Psychology as the Science of Self-Reports and Finger Movements

Whatever Happened to Actual Behavior?

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ABSTRACT—*Psychology calls itself the science of behavior, and the American Psychological Association's current "Decade of Behavior" was intended to increase awareness and appreciation of this aspect of the science. Yet some psychological subdisciplines have never directly studied behavior, and studies on behavior are dwindling rapidly in other subdisciplines. We discuss the eclipse of behavior in personality and social psychology, in which direct observation of behavior has been increasingly supplanted by introspective self-reports, hypothetical scenarios, and questionnaire ratings. We advocate a renewed commitment to including direct observation of behavior whenever possible and in at least a healthy minority of research projects.*

For decades now, psychology students have been taught from the first day of class that psychology is the science of behavior and that its ultimate goal is to describe and explain what people do. Is that a fair description? The answer varies with the specific area of psychology. Neuroscience and cognitive psychology have never had much to say about the meaningful activities people perform in their daily lives, nor have they really intended to. These fields are more interested in understanding the internal workings of the mind and brain rather than behavioral outcomes. In contrast, animal learning and developmental psychology have consistently focused on behavior, perhaps because participants studied by these fields generally cannot fill out questionnaires or read prompts on a computer screen, and their studies have ranged from bar pressing as a function of rewards to behavioral coordination between small children and their parents.

The fields of social and personality psychology, however, offer a special and discouraging case. Both of these related fields have a mandate to study the important social behaviors that compose the very texture of human life, with personality psychology focusing on individual differences in those behaviors and social psychology exploring situational influences. But personality psychology has long relied heavily on questionnaires in lieu of behavioral observation, a state of affairs that has begun to change only recently and ever so slowly, at that. Even worse, social psychology has actually moved in the opposite direction. At one time focused on direct observations of behaviors that were both fascinating and important—a focus that attracted many researchers to the field in the first place—social psychology has turned in recent years to the study of reaction times and questionnaire responses. These techniques, which promised to help to explain behavior, appear instead to have largely supplanted it. The result is that current research in social and personality psychology pays remarkably little attention to the important things that people do.

The 1990s was named the "Decade of the Brain" by the American Psychological Association (APA). This widely-advertised rubric, promoted heavily by the APA, focused attention on the importance of and advances in research on brain processes. It was wildly successful, to the extent that many funding agencies jettisoned many other research priorities as they poured money into expensive brain research and articles and conference sessions on brain studies proliferated. Brain researchers have always been more interested in brain and nervous system functioning than in behavioral implications.

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Ironically, however, their research has benefited hugely from the conviction by funding agencies and the public at large that anything a neuron does must be behaviorally important. Such relevance has been demonstrated once in a great while (e.g., in the work by Damasio, 1994, on the interaction between emotional and cognitive systems in decision making), but more often it has merely been taken on faith. Meanwhile, the increase in study of the brain has helped erode interest in the actual observation of behavior.

It seemed an extremely wise move therefore when, impressed by the success of the brain decade, APA came up with the idea of making the first decade of the new century "The Decade of Behavior." The goal was to focus attention on the contributions of psychology toward understanding and affecting important behaviors and consequent life outcomes, thereby adding relevance, credibility, and (one hoped) big research budgets to the enterprise. This emphasis was—or at least should have been—especially welcome to social and personality psychologists, whose research programs would seem to be in a position to benefit greatly from a renewed recognition of the importance of behavior.

It is now past halfway through the putative Decade of Behavior and is therefore a fair time to ask, "How's it going?" In particular, how are social and personality psychologists doing? To anticipate our answer, we think they are doing fine in many respects—but not in respect to studying behavior.

LOOKING FOR BEHAVIOR

With that question in mind, we picked up a recent (January 2006) issue of the *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* (*JPSP*), by consensus the premier journal in our subdisciplines (we are all social and personality psychologists). It is undeniably a fine issue, offering important advances in the topics the articles address. The methods are rigorous, and the discussions are thoughtful. The editors, reviewers, and authors did their jobs well.

But behavior is hard to find. Or if it is there, it is rather different than what we had imagined it to be. If this issue offers a representative sample, then human behavior is almost always performed in a seated position, usually seated in front of a computer. Finger movements, as in keystrokes and pencil marks, constitute the vast majority of human action.

In fact, a remarkable amount of "behavior" turns out to be really just marks on a self-report questionnaire. Sometimes these questionnaires ask people to report what they have done, will do, or would do. More often, they ask people to report what they think, how they feel, or why they do what they do. In other words, most personality and social psychological studies gather self-reports of inner states.

Nisbett and Wilson (1977) thought they had discredited introspection back in the 1970s, when they demonstrated that the factors that drive behavior are often invisible to the people who perform it. As their title expressed, most introspective reporting involves "telling more than we can know." Although aspects of this research became controversial, it is abundantly clear from their studies, other research, and everyday observation that people have not always done what they say they have done, will not always do what they say they will do, and often do not even know the real causes of the things they do. These discrepancies mean that self-reports of past behaviors, hypothetical future behaviors, or causes of behavior are not necessarily accurate.[1]

Nonetheless, self-report appears to have all but crowded out all other forms of behavior. Behavioral science today, at least as represented in *JPSP*, mostly involves asking people to report on their thoughts, feelings, memories, and attitudes. Occasionally they are asked to report on recent or hypothetical actions. Or, somewhat differently (and more rarely), reaction times, implicit associations, or memory recall might be assessed in the service of illuminating a cognitive process. But that is as close as most research gets. Direct observation of meaningful behavior is apparently passé.

This is certainly quite an ironic turnabout from Nisbett and Wilson's (1977) critical stance. In fact, Wilson's more recent work has shown that when people introspect to analyze the reasons for their actions, they often mislead themselves (Wilson, 2002). In a choice rhetorical flourish, he advises people who seek self-knowledge to eschew direct inspection and instead consult books on social psychology. Yet the books on social psychology are increasingly based on research that itself is heavily based on introspection.

The move from behavior to an emphasis on introspective self-report and hypothetical responses to imagined events is potentially a hugely important shift in the very nature of psychology. Psychological science started out in the 1800s with introspection (e.g., Wundt, 1894). One major development of the 20th century was the shift from introspection to direct observation of behavior, widely regarded as an advance in the development of scientific methodology. Did someone, somewhere, decide that that had been a mistake and that we should now go back to introspection?

Let's take a closer look at this recent issue of *JPSP*, which was chosen only for convenience and is presumably representative. It contains 11 articles reporting 38 studies. The closest thing to direct observation of behavior in the dependent measures of any of these studies was a participant making a decision. That is, one study asked participants to choose between two stimulus persons (who were made known to participants via photographs) to give them the postexperimental interview. Apart from that borderline case, not a single one of those 38 studies contained direct observation of behavior. The dependent measures consisted entirely of ratings, either on paper question-

[1]This does not mean they are never accurate, but rather that there is no way to know whether they are accurate or not without direct observation of behavior.

naires or computer-administered stimuli. The ratings were mainly introspective self-reports.

Some of the procedures included hints of behavior along the way. One study had participants read a fictional police report about a violent act and express a (nonbinding) opinion as to the appropriate prison sentence for the perpetrator. (So at least they read about someone else's behavior, albeit fictional behavior.) Four studies had participants take tests: one for the purpose of legitimizing bogus feedback, the other three as a basis for assessing the accuracy of self-ratings of performance. Some of the questionnaires asked people to report on their past behaviors. Several asked people to read things, such as descriptions of hypothetical behavior. One study had participants cross out all instances of the letter *e* in a page of printed text.

So that is behavior today in the leading journal of social and personality psychology: ratings and more ratings, occasionally making a choice, reading and taking a test, and crossing out the letter *e*.

Behavior fared only slightly better in the previous issue: Out of 38 studies in 13 articles, there was one that measured negotiation moves (Bowles, Babcock, & McGinn, 2005) and one that studied "how an individual actually behaves during an induced conflict" (quoted from Knee, Lonsbary, Canevello, & Patrick, 2005, p. 998). Note the authors' use of the term "actually," which illustrates their awareness of how unusual it was to observe behavior directly.[2] That study induced and videotaped a disagreement between romantic partners and then coded for understanding versus defensive behaviors (mainly speech acts; Knee et al., 2005). Those two studies are about real behavior, but again they are only 2 out of 38 studies. One additional study included a behavioral independent variable (of sorts) that consisted of people reading their e-mail message aloud before sending it (as opposed to just sending it; Kruger, Epley, Parker, & Ng, 2005). There was also a study that used a questionnaire for self-report of behavior.

We do not doubt that other surveys would yield similar numbers. Social and personality psychologists do not report much actual behavior in their premier journal or elsewhere.

WAS IT ALWAYS THUS?

Our impression is that this trend has been building for a while. In what psychologists from the baby-boom generation may remember as a golden age, social psychology for a time was characterized by studies that directly observed important behaviors in vividly evocative contexts (see Aronson, Brewer, & Carlsmith, 1985). We suspect that more than one social psychologist was inspired onto his or her career by an undergraduate class lecture on John Darley's and Bibb Latané's studies of bystander intervention (e.g., Darley & Latané, 1968) or on Stanley Milgram's (1975) obedience studies, which put real people into emotionally powerful situations and then watched what they did. Even many classic studies of inner variables such as attitudes and guilt contained dramatic behavioral experiences prior to the self-reporting of inner states (e.g., Aronson & Mills, 1959; Festinger & Carlsmith, 1959). Studies like this faded from view, however, when the field embraced the cognitive revolution in the 1980s, and the success (and apparent rigor and prestige, see Rozin, 2001) of cognitively-framed studies may have encouraged many researchers to concentrate on the self-report measures that were appropriate for those studies rather than struggle for difficult and expensive behavioral observation. The impressively successful Decade of the Brain, as we have already noted, also demonstrated to researchers the success, prestige, and funding that could accrue to studies exploring inner psychological processes while postponing, perhaps indefinitely, examination of the behavioral results of these processes.

In personality psychology, meanwhile, the interest in behavior was weaker all along in some ways, especially given the core emphasis on measurement of traits, for which self-report has long been the prominent method. Although sophisticated psychometric methods have been developed, the primary method for validating a personality questionnaire is still to demonstrate how it correlates with other questionnaires (Funder, 2001). Hundreds of studies on the "structure of personality" seek that structure amongst the correlations between questionnaires. One major recent project that aimed to compare the utility of several major personality inventories in their ability to predict behavior did so by seeing how well each one predicted self-reports of behavior (in other words, yet another questionnaire). Even personality psychologists who evince skepticism about personality traits are not immune; their research, too, is based almost exclusively on self-reports or hypothetical predictions, with only rare (and therefore highly notable) exceptions (e.g., Wright & Mischel, 1987). In recent years, a few personality psychologists have begun to look again at behavior in the laboratory (e.g., Borkenau, Riemann, Angleitner, & Spinath, 2001), assess *behavioral residue* (e.g., the condition of a student's dorm room or a worker's office cubicle; see, Gosling, Kos, Mannarelli, & Morris, 2002), and develop methods to code directly observed behavior along meaningful dimensions (e.g., the Riverside Behavioral Q-sort; Funder, Furr, & Colvin, 2000). These efforts remain rare, however, and have not been particularly influential so far. The dominant method throughout personality psychology, to this day, is the questionnaire (Funder, 2001).

We were moved by these questions and reflections to take a slightly more systematic and quantified look at behavior in *JPSP* over the decades. Two of the authors went to libraries and selected issues from 1966, 1976, 1986, 1996, and 2006 for coding. We used our birth months (March and May) for each year, and we coded all studies reported in the issue as to whether they included any direct observation of behavior. Coding was

[2]Since we wrote this, we have noticed the increasing frequency with which behavior is called "actual behavior," presumably to distinguish from the other, more commonly studied kinds or perhaps just to dramatize its rarity.

deliberately liberal, such that a study qualified as having behavior if any element involved behavior—that is, if the study used any manipulation, any dependent measure, or even used behavior as the conduit for manipulating the independent variable (e.g., taking a test and getting feedback on it). Hence, each study in each paper had a score of 0 (no behavior) or 1 (one or more behavioral element). Some articles were not included in the final tally because there were no empirical data reported, such as in conceptual or statistical papers or commentaries. Self-reports of past behaviors or of hypothetical behaviors did not count. The use of archival behavioral data (e.g., crime statistics; donating blood) qualified. Reading about someone else's behavior was not counted as behavior.

The two issues for each same year furnished quite similar numbers except for 1966, in which the very young journal had several peculiar features (including mostly one-study papers and some short reports, one of which oddly reported four brief and very similar studies that were ultimately counted as one), and so we coded two additional issues for that year to furnish a broader base; in addition, one of the originally coded issues was lost because of catastrophic computer failure. In all, we coded 304 studies across the 11 issues of *JPSP*.

Figure 1 shows the results of this coding. Back in 1966, when most articles contained only a single study, about half of these involved actual behavior. The study of behavior increased its share of the journal into the 1970s. But the use and study of behavior dropped sharply in 1986, and the subsequent decades have seen a continued downward trend. Apparently, the study of behavior has been in a steady decline since the early 1980s.

CAVEAT

We want to be very clear that we see nothing wrong with what social and personality psychologists are doing, as far as it goes.

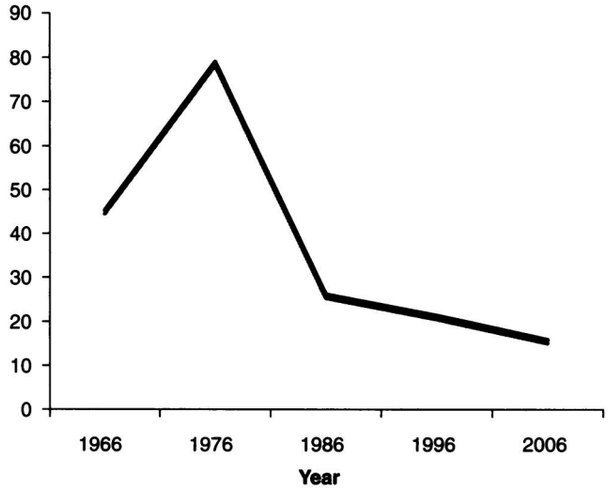

Fig. 1. Percentage of studies from *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* that included behavior (1966–2006).

Self-reports of behavior, emotion, intention, and thoughts are often illuminating, may be the appropriate method for certain topics (e.g., studies of attitudes or emotional experience), and sometimes are all that is possible. Such measures can and do lead to important and interesting knowledge that will advance theory. But the restriction of methods also serves to constrain the topics that are addressed in the first place (Rozin, 2001). In other words, our chief complaint is with what social and personality psychologists, and perhaps others in the field, are not doing.

Surely some important behavior involves standing up? Or actually talking to another live person, even beyond getting instructions about how to sign a consent form and activate the computer program? Whatever happened to helping, hurting, playing, working, taking, eating, risking, waiting, flirting, goofing off, showing off, giving up, screwing up, compromising, selling, persevering, pleading, tricking, outhustling, sandbagging, refusing, and the rest? Can't psychology find ways to observe and explain these acts, at least once in a while?

WONDERING WHY

There are probably many reasons for the sorry state of behavioral study during these last few years of the Decade of Behavior. For example, sometimes direct behavioral observations are unethical, unfeasible, or impossible. For the foreseeable future, most studies of everyday behaviors ranging from eating to sexual behavior and from exercise habits to drug use will have to rely primarily on self-report despite the obvious disadvantages. Moreover, if one wants to know what a participant is thinking or feeling, there is little alternative but to ask. And even under the best of circumstances, observing actual social behavior is more difficult, challenging, and inconvenient than just asking for ratings or sitting a participant in front of a computer screen and measuring his or her keystrokes or reaction times. The field is highly competitive, and the top journals require multiple studies, so the struggle to observe behavior, even when it would be possible, may well make it harder to crank out the volume of data that academic success now requires. Moreover, the sad fact is that many studies fail to show meaningful significant differences. A failed behavioral study is an expensive failure and could even be a major career setback. Last, and perhaps most centrally, journals do not seem to give extra points or consideration to studies that observe behavior instead of just getting ratings, so why bother?[3]

Our data on *JPSP* across the years points to the early 1980s as the beginning of a huge decline for observed behavior in studies. Several things had changed in the journal between 1976 and

[3]One of the authors of this article, in his previous capacities as Associate Editor of one personality journal and as Editor of another, did follow an (unadvertised) policy of trying very hard to accept any article that included any direct measurement of behavior, but he received very few such submissions.

1986. First, the journal had been split into three sections, and they were allocated in ways that might be taken as at best indifferent to behavior. Second, editorial policy changed toward explicitly favoring articles with multiple studies, and as we have suggested, it is far easier to do many studies by seating groups in front of computers or questionnaires than to measure behavior over and over. To be sure, other trends in the field at that time may also have contributed. These would include the cognitive revolution (itself a strong push to focus on inner process and downplay so-called actual behavior) and the steady increase in restrictive Institutional Review Boards (IRBs).

IRBs may be more likely to raise objections to behavioral measures than to ratings. From an IRB perspective, it seems far less intrusive to ask someone what she would eat than to observe how much she actually eats.[4] The problem is, of course, that hypothetical behavioral responses may be wildly inaccurate, and in any case, there is no way to know unless actual behavior is also measured. In a similar vein, it may seem less intrusive to measure "prejudice" as indicated by speed of key presses in response to prompts on a computer screen than to actually see how a person interacts with a person against whom he or she might or might not be biased. And it is certainly easier. But, as psychologists bow to pressure from the IRBs to avoid anything that might have the remotest chance of slightly upsetting their research participants and to competitive pressures to produce lots of studies per paper, they sacrifice the scientific quality of the discipline. Not to mention abandoning its original goal of being the science of behavior.

Ratings, reaction times, and similar measures are surely necessary. The maturation of the field has required a great rise of interest in inner process. In the 1960s, a researcher could manipulate independent variables, measure behavior, and simply speculate about the internal mediating process. Now the researcher is required to demonstrate the inner process as well. Adding ratings surely made for better science. But in principle, the ratings and self-reports were supposed to shed light on the behavior, not replace it.

To put it another way: Once upon a time, perhaps, psychologists observed behavior and reported what they saw, along with their theories about why it happened. The emergence of competing theories, and therefore competing explanations, led psychologists to push each other to show what happened inside the person to produce the behavior. Gradually the focus shifted on these debates about inner processes, and journals started publishing studies that made significant contributions about demonstrating inner processes. Somewhere along the way, it became acceptable to publish data on inner processes without any real behavior included at all, which eventually became the norm.

WHAT'S THE PROBLEM?

One might ask, "Is there anything wrong with learning about inner process?" We think not. But behavior matters too. It cannot be blithely assumed that responding to questionnaires is enough to tell us all we need to know about actual life. It is necessary to study actual behavior sometimes. For example, West and Brown (1975) conducted the same experiment two different ways: once by asking people what they would do in this situation, and once by actually staging the event. The experiment involved an ostensible accident victim standing on the street, asking passersby for money to help pay for medical care at a nearby clinic. Actual and hypothetical behavior differed in two major ways. First, the levels of help were dramatically different. Asked how they would react to such a request, participants said they would give fairly generously, but when the experiment was conducted live, actual donations averaged barely over 10 cents in some conditions.

The other difference is even more important for psychology's goal of building sound theories about behavior. The victim's attractiveness did not have a significant effect on hypothetical donations, but it did have a significant effect on real donations. This occurred despite the lower overall generosity in actual behavior (hence, overcoming any possible floor effect). A researcher who followed the common contemporary method of relying solely on hypothetical behavior would draw a false conclusion that would omit an important and significant contributor to actual behavior.

In recent years, the reasons for doubting self-reports and the resulting need to observe actual behavior have increased. Affective forecasting studies systematically show the inaccuracies of people's predictions about how they will react and feel (e.g., Wilson & Gilbert, 2003). Studies on judgment and decision making have likewise shown that people's predictions are inaccurate and that hypothetical decisions do not reliably match actual ones. For example, in hypothetical decisions, people are moderately risk averse regardless of the amount of money they imagine is at stake, but when actual money is used, people become dramatically more risk averse as amounts increase (Holt & Laury, 2002).

This issue has arisen before. During the 1960s and 1970s, both personality traits and attitudes came under vigorous attack on precisely these grounds. Mischel (1968) wrote a famous and influential critique arguing that personality trait measures seldom have appreciable correlations with measures of actual behavior. Wicker (1969) went so far as to suggest that attitudes, which had been touted by Gordon Allport as social psychology's most important concept, should be abandoned. The fields responded with impressive programs designed to show that, yes, one could predict some of the people's behavior some of the time

[4]One of the authors of this article spent part of her career studying how much ice cream dieters and nondieters would eat under different conditions. One university's IRB feared that measuring eating behavior—namely, having to admit to participants that their eating was being recorded—might cause dieters to go into a tailspin and develop disordered eating habits.

from attitudes and trait scales (e.g., Ajzen, 2000; Glasman & Albarracín, 2006, Kenrick & Funder, 1988).

The issues remain today, and indeed the question of attitude–behavior consistency and behavioral predictability remain important research topics. But in a recent class devoted to examining articles published in *JPSP*, the students were surprised to find that the latest article on attitude–behavior consistency did not bother measuring behavior—it asked participants to imagine what they might do in hypothetical situations. Similarly, we have already mentioned how at least one study has sought to assess the predictive validity of personality trait questionnaires via their correlations with a measure of behavior that was itself a questionnaire. This hardly seems fair. Social psychologists cannot claim that attitudes or personality predict behavior if by *behavior* they do not really mean behavior.

The problem goes even deeper. Although self-reports, reaction times, implicit associations, and the like are good and even ideal methods for examining certain topics, we believe that psychology has tilted towards examining precisely those topics for which these methods are appropriate and away from everything else (Rozin, 2001). This leads us to wonder, in the rush to test competing theories of internal processes as our discipline moves away from the description of important behavioral phenomena, what goes missing? What questions are researchers forgetting to even ask? A partial list is not difficult to generate:

- How do people with different degrees of a personality trait behave differently?
- How do situational variables such as physical aspects, social relationships, and cultural structures affect what people do?
- How do prejudiced individuals actually treat the objects of their prejudice?
- How do those who have been discriminated against respond behaviorally?
- How and when do women and men act differently in situations ranging from the first date to leading a meeting?

The reader is invited to make his or her own additions to this list—it is not difficult to do. Again, our point is not that topics like these are or never were addressed (e.g., see Nisbett & Cohen, 1996, for fascinating studies of the relationship between culture and aggressive behavior), but that they are neglected relative to the study of cognitive process and certainly relative to their intrinsic importance. This is why APA's Decade of Behavior risks becoming a laughingstock for those in social and personality psychology, the fields that should benefit the most from this initiative.

Also, it is very possible that the abandonment of behavior could be seriously detrimental to the field's goals and broad influence. A recent president of the Society for Personality and Social Psychology articulated in the society newsletter that these fields are suffering from failing to get their message across to outsiders. They are seen as not making much interesting progress, even though insiders know that the conferences and journals are filled with exciting new work. But perhaps scholars in other fields and even undergraduates find it difficult to appreciate the excitement of the work when it rests on correlations among questionnaire items or significant differences in reaction times. The dramatic behaviors of the early years of social psychology experiments are still featured in the textbooks, and probably for good reason.

TODAY'S DILEMMA

Ironically, psychologists who study behavior today find themselves at a disadvantage. Everyone would probably agree that the ideal paper would report both direct observation of behavior and measurement of inner processes that mediate and produce those behaviors. But if you only have one without the other, preferences are lopsided. Data on behavior without inner process are regarded as unpublishable by most journals. Grant reviewers often behave similarly. One of the present authors submitted a grant proposal for a behavioral study that a reviewer criticized on the grounds that it did not include "psychological variables," apparently meaning internal process measures.[5] By this definition, behavior is not even a psychological variable! Behavior by itself is regarded as only a beginning, an unsolved puzzle. Meanwhile, however, a study of inner process without behavior is acceptable.

When confronted with a study reporting behavior but not inner process, reviewers will immediately ask, why did this happen? Researchers need to show what goes on inside. But when confronted with a study reporting inner process but no overt behavior, reviewers almost never ask, "Would this actually alter behavior?" Inner process is considered interesting and important in its own right, without any proof that it has any implications for what people do.

Given those unequal contingencies, it is not surprising that researchers have turned away from behavior. It is apparently more trouble than it is worth. Ratings are the keys to success, and they are publishable with or without behavior. Behavior, meanwhile, is not publishable by itself without ratings, and moreover, behavior often has a nasty way of complicating the cleaner, more elegant picture that one can get from ratings alone.

AFFIRMATIVE ACTION FOR ACTION?

We wish to suggest, gently and respectfully,[6] that social and personality psychology try to put a bit more behavior back into the science of behavior (as psychology still advertises itself). There is no need to stop asking for ratings or analyzing reaction times, but perhaps psychologists could all push themselves to include an occasional study that includes direct observation

[5] This is not just sour grapes; the study was funded despite a negative review, which is itself an unusual outcome.

[6] Any attentive reader can tell by now that we are nothing if not gentle and respectful.

of what Knee et al. (2005) poignantly called "actual behavior." To be sure, behavioral observation is not always ethical or feasible, as we have mentioned. But when it is, why not include it? Researchers could put a bit more effort into developing methods for observing behavior directly (e.g., Furr & Funder, 2007). We could do more to build on efforts such as the behavioral batteries for personality assessment designed by Jack and Jeanne Block (Block, 1993), the behavior-sampling technologies pioneered by Matthias Mehl and his colleagues (Mehl, Gosling, & Pennebaker, 2006), behavioral observations in real life such as those used by James Dabbs, Chris Fraley, and their colleagues (Dabbs, Hargrove, & Heusel, 1996; Fraley & Shaver, 1998), work on performance as a function of approach–avoidance frames by Andrew Elliot and Carol Dweck (e.g., Elliott & Dweck, 1988), self-regulation work by Baumeister and colleagues (e.g., Baumeister, Bratslavsky, Muraven, & Tice, 1998; Vohs, Baumeister, & Ciarocco, 2005), the studies on eating behavior by Heatherton and colleagues (Heatherton, Herman, & Polivy, 1991; Vohs & Heatherton, 2000), and speech-sampling methods such as those developed by Lisa Feldman Barrett, James Pennebaker, Lisa Fast, and their colleagues (Fast & Funder, in press; Feldman Barrett, Williams, & Fong, 2002; Pennebaker, Mehl, & Niederhoffer, 2003).

Perhaps reviewers, editors, and granting agencies could even give a little extra preference to studies that contain behavior, in the spirit of affirmative action for the promotion of methodological diversity. If others share our view that the current system discourages scientists from observing behavior, then perhaps more vigorous changes can be made to redress the imbalance. Maybe a new section of *JPSP* could be earmarked for studies of behavior. Or perhaps one of the new journals that the Association for Psychological Science is introducing could be devoted to behavioral work. Having such a devoted outlet would reduce the (apparently crippling) demand that behavioral studies must compete for space with the easier-to-conduct, and therefore correspondingly more rigorous and plentiful, studies that use only ratings.

Let us stress that we are not criticizing APA's initiative on the Decade of Behavior. We support the goal wholeheartedly. But if social and personality psychology has given up on behavior, how can the field expect society as a whole to embrace it? In fact, even if society (or funding agencies at least) were to embrace the Decade of Behavior idea, would that benefit the field? The saddest outcome would be for the powerful and fund-granting authorities to decide that behavior is important after all and then to use that as a reason to disrespect the field. They might say, and not without reason, "We want to support the study of human behavior, but personality and social psychologists don't study behavior."

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