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History of Division 23

Today, I would like to present a brief history of the origins of Division 23, and in broad brushstrokes, summarize the main ways in which it has evolved. And, of course, invoking the self-granted right for senior members to pontificate, to chart new directions for those of us who identify ourselves first and foremost as psychologists.

I hope that what I say here today--as is the purpose of all historical discourse--will stimulate imagery and rethinking of who we are and where we want to go. I will mention many areas of consumer psychology that have been masked by current fashions, and yet offer substantial potential for integrating the interests of its members and contribution to human welfare and happiness.

By understanding our ancestry, we are better able to make more considered choices of whether we should simply nod farewell to the past, build on it, or rediscover its strengths. By simply thinking about the Division's past, we can achieve a better self-definition. By considering history as organized non-fictional story-telling, we can better appreciate the human elements in our organization: the gamesmanship, the fun, the foibles, the excitement, the boredom.

I have been very personally involved in this Division ever since it was simply a twinkle in my and in my colleagues' eyes. As an expression of this involvement, I will use the first person singular and plural.

Possibly I have a broader perspective because my career has been in all three employment worlds: in government, in private industry, and in academia. I have engaged in methodological, theoretical, and programmatic research and in practically every area of psychology from psychometrics to social to experimental and physiological to economic behavior. One of my colleagues said I switched often before I was found out, but I prefer another explanation, a logical sequence of careers from food (in government) to gas (in industry--at Amoco) to hot air (in academia).

The Ancestral Genes

In the late 1950s, I was a member of a group that I still consider to have been the very best group of psychologists I have ever worked with: at the Armed Forces Food and Container Institute, Chicago. David R. Peryam was the chief (official civil service title). The other psychologists in the group were Frank Pilgrim (physiological psychology), Howard Schutz (experimental, industrial, and social psychology), Jan Eindhoven (social psychology, experimental), and Richard Seaton (sociology, social psychology, environmental design). I still call that time the "Golden Age."

Dave Peryam was a jewel, the best boss I ever had. He encouraged all of us to do our own thing, to follow our intellectual curiosity, as long as it represented a balance between methodological, theoretical, and programmatic contributions. He instilled in us the appreciation for the consumer, typically members of the armed forces, but as I will mention later, other segments as well.

Dave encouraged innovation, tempered by common sense, respect for others, and wisdom of the past. He developed and nurtured contacts and ties with the outside world (e.g., National Academy of Sciences), with people in industry (e.g., Joe Bradley, Gove Laybourne), with academia (e.g., Bob Perloff and the many, many psychologists who were recipients of our grants and contracts), with advertising agencies (e.g., Leo Burnett; Dik Twedt, Ed Faison). He imparted a spirit of fun, challenge, and an ideal blend of competition and cooperation.

Besides the broad range of talent and Dave Peryam, we were blessed with several other advantages:

1. Support from the National Research Council, National Academy of Sciences, and various working Industry Advisory Councils. We proposed and members of the Councils advised, consulted, encouraged, and blessed.
2. Good external research programs. We were able to award grants and contracts for much basic and applied research. Examples of contracts on which I was the Project Officer were: (a) The Human Areas Research Files (Yale University) on the most comprehensive study in the world of food habits and dietary patterns of major ethnic groups; (b) Psychometric Laboratories, University of Chicago and University of North Carolina on basic psychometric research (among which were the first versions of what we now call "conjoint"); (c) University of Chicago, on survey research; and many others on topics ranging from impacts of stress on dietary patterns to persuasive communications and consumption preferences in unusual environments (space, arctic, jungle, etc.).
3. Recipients of contracts. For example, I worked on space feeding research through a subcontract from the Air Force, a prime contractor for NASA.
4. A commitment to research excellence and fun.
5. Ability to conceive and execute studies immediately. Example: Howard Schutz and I developed and ran and analyzed studies within days or weeks after the idea sprouted. At least one study was formulated, designed, run, analyzed, and reported within eight hours. We often conceptualized and completed studies in a fraction of the time necessary to complete a simple grant application. We became spoiled because we did just about everything we felt was in the best of interests of the country-- with no red tape.
6. Terrific administrative and technical support. For example, we had available top-level consultants (e.g., Kenneth Brownlee who was chairman of the Mathematical Statistics Department, University of Chicago), Lloyd Beidler (University of Alabama, who did much pioneering work on how stress affects sensitivity to tastes and odors) and internal technical staffs (e.g. Norman Guttman, chief statistician).
7. A scientific atmosphere. We were not an island, but part of a scientific community inhabited and evaluated by practically every major physical and biological science discipline. We worked with, for example, chemists and developed new theories of olfaction. We were busy linking physical

and biological variables, for example, product composition and arousal of the sympathetic nervous system, to psychological phenomena, for example, product preferences and cravings and aversions.

8. Decent budgets that enabled us to build some of the best controlled testing laboratories in the country. Howard Schutz had enough funds to design and build one of the few olfactoriums in the country.
9. Good links with many profit and nonprofit organizations.
10. A singular focus on the target for our efforts: the consumer. Indeed, we considered ourselves as the representative of consumers, at first military consumers, but later, the world at large and special segments (e.g., astronauts). We acknowledged and were proud of the fact that we were a consumer research organization, an organization having a psychological bent. We did pioneering work on monotony, changes in preferences in different physical environments, impacts of stress on appetites, aversions, and sensory sensitivities, and on attitude change, sensory processes, addictions, and dozens of other topics.

Each one of us published extensively and presented papers both at regional and national psychological conventions, and also before other scientific groups (e.g., Human Factors Society, Institute of Food Technologists, American Dietetic Association, etc.). And we did win awards, for example from the American Society for Testing and Materials for pioneering work in sensory evaluation. And we did win recognition, for example, from Anne Anastasi, former APA president, for a consistent, coherent, and both useful and scientific research program.

But something was missing, a professional identity as psychologists.

The Insemination

By the late 1950s, we had already established a reputation for doing pioneering work on consumers in practically every psychological field: sensory evaluation, attitude and preference surveys, attitude change, physiological psychology, psychometrics, etc. Several psychologists in the marketing and advertising world became interested in what we were doing. Joe Bradley, for example, once worked for Dave Peryam, and after a stint in Australia, joined the Pillsbury company (and later Lipton) and frequently visited us for ideas that he could apply at Pillsbury, which was a client of Leo Burnett Advertising. Coincidentally, Dave had known Dik Twedt's wife and through her, Dik Twedt himself. Dik was at Leo Burnett. And Dik introduced the group to fellow psychologists: Ed Faison, Clark Leavitt (Ohio State), John Maloney, and several others.

We reached a critical mass and established an informal group that we called the Headshrinkers. Bob Perloff, who was consulting with Science Research Associates in Chicago, and his wife, were Dave Peryam's friends. Dave invited Bob to join the group, and he became so fascinated with what became the field of consumer psychology, that he started the first doctoral program at Purdue. Among those he attracted to Purdue was Jack Jacoby, who earned his doctorate from Michigan State and headed the doctoral program in consumer psychology at Purdue. Attracted to the program were such outstanding people as Leon Kaplan,

Ivan Ross, Larry Krueger, Jerry Olson. As you all know, Bob Perloff was elected president of APA.

The Headshrinkers met monthly at lunch--usually at the Prudential Building in Chicago. We exchanged methodologies, theories, and results. Despite the disparate parent organizations, we found that we had common interests and ties--but no national home or national legitimacy. We presented our papers through the auspices of other APA divisions (Experimental, Psychometric Society, Society for the Psychological Studies of Social Issues, Industrial, etc.). Each of these divisions had as its focus a content area or a discipline within psychology, and not a population segment. We asked ourselves: why not a division that addresses a specific segment? We knew that it would be unwise to call the Division of Clinical Psychology the Division for the Psychology of the Disturbed or the consulting group the Division for the Psychology of the Perplexed, but we saw no stigma in using a name appropriate for all people, consumers.

I and my colleagues at the Food and Container Institute took these longings to heart. Howard Schutz and I wrote the basic plan for establishing a Division of Consumer Psychology. We envisioned a Division that would cover every relevant area of psychology as long as it had its focus on the consumer. I drafted a petition and induced Dik Twedt to serve as the spokesman. We launched an intensive public relations program.

We had a minor debate whether the Division should be called the Division of Consumer Psychology and or the Division of Consumer Behavior. The consensus was that psychology is a broader term, a term that more comprehensively covers all the subfields: attitude measurement and change, sensory processes, social psychological phenomena, and just about every other discipline. To us, it connoted the legitimacy of both applied and basic research. We also felt that the word "psychology" would foster identification as psychologists rather than as marketers, sociologists, and other fields.

At our own expense, the members of the Institute staff circulated these petitions nationally. We wanted to include every relevant psychological discipline such as, but not limited to:

- a. Motivational psychology (e.g., Ernest Dichter).
- b. Clinical psychology (e.g., Alvin Rosenstein).
- c. Economic psychology (e.g., George Katona)
- d. Psychometrics (e.g., Lyle Jones)
- e. Experimental psychology (e.g., Ernest Furchtgott)
- f. Human engineering

Later, we recruited such people as Ray Bauer, Jag Sheth, and Herbert Krugman, and after his Bar Mitvah, Jack Jacoby.

We had enough signatures on the petitions to warrant consideration by the APA leadership. But we faced--and eventually overcame--many obstacles: the anti-business orientation of the Council of Representatives (whose definition of consumer psychology ran something like this: the pimp that panders between the greed of business and depravities of the consumer); the feelings by those in Division 14 that we posed a threat to its existence; a general fear of the proliferation of Divisions and the splintering of APA into factions that would weaken the common bonds among divisions.

Division 14, known at that time as the Division of Industrial Psychology, fought us, defining consumer psychology as a branch of industrial psychology. Despite our petition, Division 14 convinced APA's Council of Representatives of our illegitimacy. The Council voted against establishing the Division of Consumer Psychology.

The clinical people looked at us as potential clients, the experimentalists as harlots, the industrial psychologists as a radical fringe, the social psychologists as exemplars of mendacity, and the APA leadership as a nuisance deserving sterilization if not outright eradication.

We rewrote the bylaws and we lobbied hard, and we would not go away. The following year, using tactics that borrowed both from guerilla warfare and classical machine politics, we won recognition--by one vote. I attended the debate in the Council of Representatives as an observer, not as a delegate. When the vote for the issue was called for, I stood up to ask a question. To this day, I am not certain whether my standing up constituted the one-vote winning margin. In any case, my strong identification with Chicago and its political technology and heritage immunized me from any guilt feelings.

So we were granted the charter and we worked with APA in formally being incorporated within its structure. I believe that Division 23 broke the barrier for new Divisions, because soon after we were awarded our birth certificate, a flood of new applications arose and APA gradually became more a confederation of interest groups rather than an organization with a unitary outlook. In short, the de-Sovietization process accelerated.

These, then, were the origins.

The Flavor for the Next Two Decades

We wanted diversity: diversity in members' backgrounds, diversity in content areas, diversity in theory and applications, diversity in research approaches. In short, I felt that diversity would be the main defining and unique feature of Division 23--as long as the diversity had strong psychological linkages. The climate of diversity would, I felt, provide a home to everyone and the opportunities for seeds of interest and knowledge to grow into forests. We saw consumer psychology both as host to other psychological disciplines, but also as a sperm or ovum donor.

I personally was not in favor of formal consumer psychology curricula. I feared that they would lead to establishing a closed system that will shut out innovative ideas and reward researchers for technical virtuosity rather than for substantive accomplishments. I feared, too, that the technicians, those adept in mathematics and model-building would snuff out creative and useful approaches, that journal editors would emerge from the population of equation jugglers and compulsive formalizers of the trivial rather than from the ranks of visionaries.

Many of you will remember the scene in the movie, The Graduate, where Dustin Hoffman was told that the future was plastics. Well, one day, Jack Jacoby intensified my fears when he proclaimed that the future was in cognition and information processing models.

Yes, there was a place for information processing models. But we also welcomed behavioral modification, human engineering, psychometrics, learning theory, sensory processes, physiological psychology, and virtually every other field of psychology, some never clearly defined. I was proud of the notable ideas and work not only of Jack Jacoby, but also of Ernest Dichter, Herbert Krugman, Raymond Bauer, George Katona, Leo Bogart, and several others who contributed to the intellectual excitement of the Division.

Politicization

Something else also happened in the late 1960's, the politicization of APA. I was a member of the Council of Representatives in 1968, the year of the Chicago riots. The Council met in San Francisco the day after the newscasts showed Chicago police bashing some heads, a mild precursor to Rodney King--but without charges of racism. The previous agenda was scrapped in favor of a myriad of resolutions condemning what happened in Chicago and cancelling Chicago as the site for the 1969 convention.

What impressed me was the hysteria, the demands by presumably rational and thinking psychologists on the basis of incomplete evidence. I witnessed unrestrained emotional reactions rather than development of a coherent strategy. Had the Council members been armed, they would have gone on a rampage. I won't mention by names those "distinguished" members who rejected the proposals of the few who requested more considered deliberations and debate and who labelled those who urged more caution as fascists. I won't mention them by name because several later became APA presidents.

I, of course, voted against the boycott because I sensed that members were attempting to use APA as a political tool rather than as a means for scientific expression, as a device for false giving scientific and professional legitimacy to their own values. And besides, several of my good physician friends were making a good living patching up bashed heads.

In my presidential address a few years later, I foresaw a succession of issues that would divide APA. And these issues, from boycotting those States that failed to pass the ERA amendment to not accepting advertising from the Armed Forces because of their rejections of homosexuals, continue to emerge.

The Voids

I regretted even more than the shift to political issues the fact that much of the early work in consumer psychology failed to attract a critical mass of interest needed to sustain a long-term research direction.

For example, I felt that George Katona, had he been living, would have been a winner of a Nobel prize in economics. He examined many assumptions underlying economic theory and clearly showed how invalid they were. Economists' theories of consumer behavior typically ignore how consumers interpret various actions such as cuts or increases in the discount rate or changes in fiscal policies. They assume that the consumers' driving force is to obtain the best value in products and services, the best balance between price and quality.

Katona pointed out that economists rarely, if ever, examine the possibility, for example, that consumers might interpret a lower interest rate as a sign of desperation rather than as a sign of hope. Economists assume that once they adjust plumbing of the system--the pipes, the valves, and the nipples--that water will flow as long as adequate pressure--money supply--exists. Economists, Katona pointed out, do not or cannot incorporate human values other than low prices and ignore the crucial element of psychological readiness. I always considered it a pity that Katona's magnificent book, The Powerful Consumer, is not mentioned in the vast majority of consumer behavior texts. Even stranger are the omissions of the work on consumer sentiment by the Institute for Social Research, University of Michigan, the Conference Board, and other organizations.

What has happened, in my opinion, is a de facto new definition of consumer psychology that is represented in most textbooks that, in my opinion, are deadly similar to one another. They confirm Jacoby's prediction that the future is information processing and its many cousins and in-laws, including multi-attribute models, advertising theory, and Talmudic mindsets.

Division 23 now is less diverse than it was in first decade. As Herb Krugman often pointed out, consumers are first and foremost biological entities, but we ignore this fact in favor of the flow chart conceptualizations of decision processes.

Here are examples of some areas that we psychologists have largely ignored:

- Biochemical and neurological bases of likes, dislikes (or appetites and aversions) and cognitive functioning. Included here are circadian rhythms and hormonal cycles and age and sex correlates.
- Product and environmental design on the basis of both functional and experiential criteria.
- Esthetics, not only the biological determinants, but also the learning factors involved, and the etiology of monotony and satiation.
- Applications of behavior modification theory.

Ironically, Walt Disney (and Michael Eisner?) probably had more insights into these matters than we have had ever had.

In Closing

What I have said here today will, I hope, stimulate argument and debate, and above all thought of who we are and what we want to be. I hope that what I have opined will help clarify some issues such as the relationships with ACR and hundred organizations, separate curricula, encouragement or discouragement of diversity.