

THE

PSYCHOLOGICAL BULLETIN

SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY IN SMALL'S GENERAL
SOCIOLOGY.¹

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Professor Small's volume² just issued, although containing much less in the way of detailed psychological construction than was given in Professor Giddings's *Inductive Sociology*, is nevertheless of great interest to those who have followed, or desire to follow, the gradual development of a psychological standpoint and method in the treatment of social problems. The aspects of the volume which are of chief interest for social psychology may be considered under the following topics: (1) The Elements of the Social Process, (2) The Nature of the Social Process, (3) The Province of Social Psychology.

¹This number, dealing especially with topics in social psychology, has been prepared under the editorial care of Professor James H. Tufts.

²*General Sociology. An exposition of the main development in sociological theory from Spencer to Ratzenhofer*, by Albion W. Small. Chicago, The University of Chicago Press, 1905. Pp. xiii + 739. \$4.00 net.

The author states that the purpose of the book is to present neither a system of sociology nor a history of sociology, but rather a conspectus of present conceptions and lines of tendency, in which much space is given relatively to questions of scope and method. Its main thesis is that 'the central line in the path of methodological progress from Spencer to Ratzenhofer is marked by gradual shifting of effort from analogical representation of social structures to real analysis of social processes.' In conformity with this thesis there are, for the first half, brief expositions of Spencer's structural view of society, then a brief exposition of Schäffle's functional view, followed by an extended exposition and interpretation of Ratzenhofer. In the last half, an extended account of sociological concepts is followed by a view of the psychical, ethical and technical problems in the social process. In the present article it goes without saying that no attempt is made to appraise the book as sociology, further than to say that to a layman such a conspectus of progress and tendencies appears to be very opportune.

1. *The Elements of the Social Process.*—Sociology seems definitely to have abandoned the 'individual' as the unit of analysis. The methodological ground for this may be very briefly stated, although I do not know whether the sociologist has put it in just this form. If individuals are our units, we are forced to explain a variety of results from identical causes. Or else we must say that individuals differ; and then we make, not individuals, but certain constitutive elements in individuals the ultimate units. What explains everything explains nothing. The question is, why do certain individuals act in one way, and others in another; or again, why do the same individuals act in one way at one time and in another way at another time? Professor Small (following Ratzenhofer) finds the social unit, and then the answer to these questions, in the concept of 'interests.' The social structure at any time is made up of more or less definitely organized interests; the historical process is the result of the conflict or union of interests. The various institutions, political, ecclesiastical, professional, industrial, etc., are devices, means, gradually brought into existence, to serve interests. Typical interests are security of existence, kinship, national, ecclesiastical, pecuniary, class, rank, and corporate. Each interest is at bottom exclusive, peremptory and insistent upon being satisfied. All the various interests may, however, be classed under six, health (including satisfaction of bodily appetites), wealth, knowledge, sociability, beauty, rightness.

It would seem that sociology is unquestionably on the right track in substituting interests for individuals as the unit of analysis. But certain difficulties, requiring further examination, at once present themselves. A minor question is as to the number and classification of interests proposed. Can all the interests which move man in society be classed under the six kinds named? To answer this we must understand whether we class and name the elements from the agent's standpoint or from the observer's, *i. e.*, the sociologist's standpoint. Is it a psychological or a teleological term, and if the latter, who is to fix the 'end' which serves as the standard? Professor Small answers that the term is to be used in sociology teleologically, although he also states that it makes little difference, for purposes of sociology, whether we define interests objectively as the ends toward which the life process moves, or as the ends which are actual objects of desire (subjective ends). It would seem, however, to make a decided difference in the number and classification of these ends. It is conceivable that the ends actually reached by a given man may be wealth or knowledge, while the actual conscious interest or desire is

simply to outstrip a rival. And this would be as true of communities in their activities directed toward improving the school system or building a navy as in the case of an individual. So, too, in every political campaign, besides those who are contending for spoils and those who are contending for good government, there is a considerable number who want to win, simply to have the satisfaction of winning. The instinct or interest of rivalry is certainly a most important subjective end, and it scarcely seems to be capable of inclusion under either of the heads named. Certainly also social psychology would have to take account of this interest and it is difficult to see how the sociologist can give a true picture of society without considering just such differences as are illustrated in the case of this particular interest.

A more important question is, which standpoint, viz., the subjective or the teleological, is more useful? It seems not a mere analogy, but a proper aid, to ask how we explain an individual's life-process. We cannot assume that either the ends toward which the process actually moves, or the conscious desires are the exclusive and all-sufficient explanation. Nor could we give an adequate statement in either 'objective' or 'subjective' terms. Just because the life process ranges from instinct to volition, and from selective intelligence to habit, because it is in an environment physical and social which both makes and is made by the nature of the process with its ends and interests, it is becoming less possible for the psychologist to fulfill his task by the employment of any fixed unit of analysis. Even the economist has abandoned the desire for wealth as a fixed entity. Will not the sociologist find it to be desirable, if his problem is to comprehend and explain the social process, to take a farther step, and treat interests not as units but as themselves modes to be accounted for and resolved? Men sometimes act from (subjective) interest; sometimes from tendencies toward ends not consciously recognized (instinct); sometimes from habit. Voluntary organizations, kinship groups, customs handed down by tradition, may all be said to represent interests, but they are very different in their origin and significance.

2. *The Social Process.* — The social process is defined as 'incessant reaction of persons prompted by interests that in part conflict with the interests of their fellows, and in part comport with the interests of others.' Conflict is the 'conspicuous element,' especially in the earlier phases. Three stages are specified as struggle, moralization (by which is meant, apparently, regulation by a group as contrasted with an individual standard on the one hand, or a universal standard on the other), socialization. Professor Small recog-

nizes that the relation of conflict and coöperation is not one of antecedent and consequent in time. Nevertheless, from the standpoint of social psychology it may be questioned whether the perspective is a true one which places so much stress on the struggle aspect of the earlier phases of the social process. Every war or conflict between groups implies coöperation (within the groups); and their internal coöperation is fully as significant as the external conflict.

On the other hand there are many kinds and degrees of struggle in modern life which were unknown in primitive conditions. Modern society has less *violent* struggles, but has far more of competition than more primitive life. An Indian tribe knows no such economic struggle as that which marks our city life. "A whole tribe of Indians might starve, a single Indian never." The savage chief cannot comprehend the individualism which is symbolized by the stone palace of the rich and the filthy tenement of the poor standing side by side.

Again, as regards the increase of socialization, it is necessary to bear in mind also the concomitants of increasing wants and therefore of new incentives to struggle, not to speak of the new instruments for carrying on contests. There is undoubtedly more socialization as society progresses. The power of the social whole impresses more and more the members, as it has more to offer of contents, such as art, science, justice, which appeal to social rather than to exclusive interests. The social whole is thus itself constantly creating the capacity by which it is appreciated and the desire by which it is sought. But, on the other hand, the process is constantly awakening new interests of the exclusive sort. No savage, barbarous, or semi-civilized chief ever planned a campaign so comprehensively and probably so coldly, so far as the fate of other interests is concerned, as a modern corporation. In fact, one of the happy touches of Professor Small's book is the comment that corporations have no souls because they are merely a single abstract interest. Now the earlier stages of society have no such sharply organized and abstract interests. We are impressed by the struggles of earlier stages because they are violent and obvious. We may easily overlook both the manifold struggles of the civilized, and the amount of coöperation in the savage life.

This suggests that the social process might be more fruitfully interpreted in terms of another pair of categories, which Professor Small recognizes but does not utilize extensively, viz., individualization (including definition of aims, self-control, and freedom) and socializa-

tion. This twofold process can certainly be traced both objectively in institutions and psychologically in the form and content of ideals, desires, and volition. The individual is recognized to be a social outcome, not a social unit; many of his interests are also social outcomes rather than social units.

3. *The Province of Social Psychology.*—Formulations of the specific problems of social psychology have recently appeared from Professor Thomas, summarized in the BULLETIN of November, 1904, and by Professor Ross, summarized in this number. Professor Small gives a general rather than a specific statement. Social psychology is 'the restatement of the social process in terms of purpose and choice.' This definition aims to mark out the field as distinct from biology on the one hand, and individual psychology on the other. As compared with the latter the problem is 'to generalize the purpose reactions that occur in typical situations.' The most general classification of cases is into two groups; *i. e.*, first, cases in which mass-valuations are adopted by the individual; second, cases in which individual valuations are communicated to the mass. This yields the main questions: "Through what appeal to interest does a group purpose come to be adopted as an individual purpose? and, Through what appeal to interest does an individual purpose come to be adopted as a group purpose?" As contrasted with biology the emphasis lies on the conception of purpose and choice. This, in contrast with such a category as 'imitation.'

As regards the basis of distinction from individual psychology, there is coming to be a consensus of opinion that the field must lie in the consciousness of the individual as affected by his group relations. But it is probable that it will not be practically desirable, whatever the theoretical definition of the field, to limit such relations to the purposes and choices. In the study of the individual, instinct and habit are doubtless biological and physiological facts, but the psychologist can scarcely get on without them. So the action of society upon the individual is often in ways that do not involve conscious choice by the individual. For example the phenomenon of religious conversion may be due in part to conscious choice in response to group stimulus. But the *kind* of experience, its imagery and in part its emotional coloring, will depend largely upon suggestions adopted without any conscious choice. Or, to take Professor Small's illustration of the part played by volition, even in the following of a fashion. In criticising Tarde's doctrine of imitation, he very justly points out that not every suggestion is accepted. Not every attempted style of hat 'goes.' It

must suit the buyer. This must certainly be admitted. Nevertheless there is another side. The buyer's choice is not unconditioned, free construction of desirable headgear; it is limited to two or three alternatives. The buyer may choose between certain copies, but the copies are set for him. And along with the elements which he takes because he wants them, he takes many others which are simply a part of the hat, and therefore have to be taken whether he will or not. Or, in the more complex case of suggestions from human action or language or institutions, many features are adopted without receiving any focusing of attention upon themselves. There is thus very much in the stuff out of which the individual and the social builds up its structures which is simply taken by suggestion without any conscious volition. This is the element of truth in the theory of Tarde. We may cordially agree that we have complete social consciousness and social activity when, as social groups, we act for reasons and with definite ends, but is not this for social, as for individual psychology, a limiting ideal rather than an exclusive test of the psychological?