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ANGUS CAMPBELL

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A Biographical Memoir by

CLYDE H. COOMBS

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Angus Campbell

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ANGUS CAMPBELL was christened Albert Angus Campbell in Leiters, Indiana, and his first publications appeared under that name. In 1946, at age thirty-six, his twelfth publication appeared (with George Katona as coauthor) under the name Angus Campbell—and that is what he was known as ever after. He once remarked that he felt he was nobody until he became just Angus Campbell.

He was the fifth of six children born to Albert Alexis Campbell and his wife, Orpha Brumbaugh. His father, the son of a farmer, went to high school in Ann Arbor, Michigan, and then on to the University of Michigan, where he graduated in 1897 with a degree in Latin and Greek. He returned to Indiana to become a teacher, principal, and finally superintendent of schools in Peru, Indiana. Angus's father had grown up in a strict Scottish Presbyterian atmosphere. It is said, perhaps apocryphally, that Angus's grandfather and great-uncle, returning from church one Sunday in their horse-drawn cart, passed by a lovely lake; one enjoined the other not to look at it on the Sabbath. Such values do not dissipate in two generations.

Angus was two years old when his father realized ten thousand dollars on an investment in a grain elevator. He moved the family to Portland, Oregon, bought a large house,

and became a school principal. Angus grew up in Portland and attended the University of Oregon, where he received the B.A. in 1931 and the M.A. in 1932, both in psychology. He then transferred to Stanford University, where Kurt Lewin was a visiting professor in the summer and fall of 1932. Angus attended Lewin's lectures and read some of his articles, as yet untranslated from the original German. He always felt that Lewin had exerted a major influence on his education as a psychologist. A personal friendship developed that lasted throughout the remainder of Lewin's life.

The other major influence during Angus's graduate student years was Ernest Hilgard, who came to the Psychology Department at Stanford in 1934 and established an experimental program in human conditioning and learning. Hilgard served as a role model for Angus in research and teaching; Angus was his research assistant and later an assistant in Hilgard's popular course in elementary psychology. Angus was Hilgard's first doctoral student, earning his degree in 1936 with a thesis on eye-blink conditioning.

There were two academic jobs available to him that year, one at Ohio State University and the other at Northwestern University; Angus accepted the position as instructor in psychology at Northwestern. He was promoted to assistant professor in 1940. He went to Northwestern expecting to teach experimental psychology, but as Franklin Fearing had just moved from Northwestern to UCLA, Angus was asked to teach Fearing's course in social psychology. In so doing, he came into contact with Melville Herskovits, a social anthropologist at Northwestern, and attended his courses and seminars. In a very short time this influence, along with his own experience teaching social psychology, completed his transition from an experimental to a social psychologist. It was the track he was to follow for the remainder of his career.

At Herskovits' urging, Angus applied for and received a

Social Science Research Council fellowship to study social anthropology at Cambridge University during 1939 and 1940, but World War II ended his stay in England after half a year. He then moved the site of his work to the Virgin Islands, where he did field research among the black population on St. Thomas that resulted in a monograph examining the group's culture and personality. This was his first experience with field work and with research on race relations, both of which became major concerns of his professional life. Earlier, at Northwestern, he had met Jean Winter, a student in psychology, and during his stay on St. Thomas they were married.

Angus's intellectual transition from an experimental to a social psychologist fully matured when he left Northwestern to join Rensis Likert's Division of Program Surveys in the Department of Agriculture in Washington, D.C. Likert had been asked by Henry Wallace, then Secretary of Agriculture, to form a research unit to provide information useful in program planning and policymaking.

Likert had been developing the methodology of large-scale sample surveys for the Life Insurance Agency Management Association as a tool for scientific research, probing for attitudes, intentions, expectations, and trends that would reflect dynamic aspects of a society—and not merely a static description. With the advent of World War II, the Division of Program Surveys' areas of research expanded, and so did the personnel. Angus joined Likert's group in 1942, and thus was formed a professional (and personal) relationship that was to endure for life.

Other social scientists assembled by Likert who also became longtime research associates of Angus Campbell included Charles Cannell, Dorwin Cartwright, George Katona, Daniel Katz, and Leslie Kish, as well as others, like Theodore Newcomb, who were associated with particular projects.

This was a period of rapid development in survey research methodology, especially in probability sampling, interview techniques, and questionnaire construction. For Angus in particular, these developments were paralleled with experience in research administration, including the translation of the needs of management and planners into well-structured, researchable problems followed by communication and interpretation of the research findings to clients and the public.

Two well-known studies undertaken by the Department of Agriculture Division 7 Program Surveys during this period were the War Bond Redemption Study and the Bombing Survey. The first had to do with determining a suitable policy for War Bond redemption, based on projections of consumer attitudes after the cessation of hostilities. The second was a study of the effect of bombing raids on the attitudes and behavior of civilians in Germany and Japan.

This was a new kind of social science. To preserve and develop it, the survey group wanted to move as a unit to an academic setting, continuing large-scale survey research useful to policymakers, managers, and operations planners. But the role and status of such research in an academic setting was not yet normalized, so an innovative arrangement with the University of Michigan was formulated in 1946. The Survey Research Center was established: The University provided housing, and some limited financial support based on teaching and academic services, and research program support was obtained from outside grants and contracts, with overhead funds retained by the Survey Research Center.

In 1948, after Kurt Lewin died, his group, then at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, transferred to the University of Michigan as the Research Center for Group Dynamics. The two centers were joined to form the Institute for Social Research, with Rensis Likert as head and Angus

Campbell as assistant to Likert, as well as director of the Survey Research Center.

For the remainder of his life Angus carried substantial administrative responsibility, but continued to be active in research. After Likert's retirement in 1970, Angus succeeded him as director of the Institute, a post he relinquished in 1976 to return to research as a program director in the Survey Research Center.

Throughout this long period many important studies were conducted. Beginning in 1948, Angus collaborated with Robert L. Kahn in a study of presidential voting intentions, reported in a small monograph, *The People Elect a President* (1952). The election of 1948 represented a massive failure of pre-election polls to predict correctly the election of President Truman, a failure attributed to misguessing the actual vote of the late deciders. In contrast to the commercial polls, Campbell and Kahn refused to predict a victory for Dewey over Truman. They took this position in part because their data did not support it, and in part because they continued to collect data up to the day of the election, the latter being one of the reasons they adhered to a policy of nonprediction in all their subsequent election studies. Following this initial election study, Angus established a research program for the continuing study of election behavior, collaborating with Gerald Gurin and Warren Miller, and in later years with Miller, Philip E. Converse, and Donald E. Stokes. This program developed into the Center for Political Studies, another center within the Institute for Social Research.

This program produced a series of books, among which *The American Voter* (1960, published in collaboration with Philip E. Converse, Warren E. Miller, and Donald E. Stokes) is a landmark. It is based on national samples in the 1952 and 1956 elections, and smaller samples in 1948, 1954, and 1958. The purpose of this research was to examine the be-

havior of the voter as an individual and not to describe the electorate as a whole. Toward this end, they introduced ideas of "ideological conceptualization" and of a "funnel of causality."

The kinds of ideological conceptualization distinguished between persons in terms of the degree to which they used ideological concepts in making sense of political affairs. The notion of a "funnel of causality" was a metaphor for the narrowing down along a time axis from the more remote factors affecting a voter's decision, such as party identification and social class, to the more immediate factors of specific attitudes and candidates.

Although these concepts do not play a significant role in subsequent studies, they reflect a concern for explanatory theoretical abstractions of greater generality than the descriptive statistical relationships revealed in the data. The book was soon described as a classic, and it has had a seminal influence in political science. Angus was influential in establishing the Interuniversity Consortium for Political Research, which is, among other things, an archive of social and political data. The continuing series of election studies has been declared by the National Science Foundation "a national resource," the first such designation outside of the natural sciences.

Just a few years after *The American Voter* was published, another book by the same four authors, *Elections and the Political Order,* appeared (1966). Of its fifteen chapters, thirteen are papers published by them, separately or in collaboration with others, during the interval between 1960 and 1963. This collection reveals some of the cumulative potential in programmatic research made possible by the continuing series of election studies and an archive of data.

The chapters are organized into four parts, beginning with a focus on the individual voter and why he behaves as

he does. The book progresses to elections as the units of analysis and collective (institutional) factors as explanatory variables. Party affiliation, political ideology, and two-party and multiparty systems are studied, using comparative data from France and Norway. Campbell's own contributions include an explanation for the puzzling regularity of the loss of seats suffered by the party in the White House in the off-year elections, referred to as surge and decline, as well as a classification of presidential elections.

Campbell had revealed an early interest in racial prejudice in his field work on St. Thomas, published in 1943. In 1967, in response to a government request, he and Howard Schuman directed a large study of racial attitudes in fifteen cities in North America. This resulted in a brief report for the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders published by the Government Printing Office. The report was followed a few years later by a somewhat longer book entitled *White Attitudes Toward Black People,* based on a secondary analysis of the data, and including some data from the Survey Research Center's election studies of 1964, 1968, and 1970. Since then, the Institute for Social Research has been monitoring trends in racial attitudes by repeating parts of that study every two years.

By the 1970s his interests had turned to social accounting more generally. He regarded the Institute's continuing research studies on voting behavior, political institutions, and race relations as prototypes for the study of more general social trends. With the support of the Russell Sage Foundation, he and Philip E. Converse edited a book entitled *The Human Measurement of Social Change* (1972). The twelve contributions contained in this book are concerned with possible psychological components and indicators of social change, such as attitudes and aspirations. The essays ranged over a variety of areas, including time budgeting, leisure, and eco-

nomic affairs. Angus's own contribution was on the relation of levels of aspiration and satisfaction to social change.

The Russell Sage Foundation provided support for a nationwide survey on the quality of American life, which resulted in the 1976 book of that title by Campbell, Converse, and Willard L. Rodgers. Measuring the quality of life is probably the granddaddy of all social psychological measurement problems and may be inherently impossible to achieve in the strict sense. On the other hand, there is an intuitively compelling reasonableness about the concept and a "need-to-know" that makes some social scientists and statisticians willing to brave the perils and to construct an index.

In their book on the quality of American life, seventeen specific domains of life experience were investigated, such as marriage, health, job, savings, and the like. A weighted additive combination of an individual's ratings on those components was used to predict an individual's global rating of his or her sense of well-being.

The book contains a wealth of data, but one of the more interesting findings reported is that subjective feelings of satisfaction do not always mirror objective reality in simple ways. Subjective ratings of variables like satisfaction with housing, standard of living, and utility of education, for example, did not just steadily increase or steadily decrease in their relation to some objectively measured variables like income, age, and education. They offered two explanations for this failure of the subjective to mirror the objective in a monotonic manner: accommodation, that is, adaptation over time; and constricted horizons, a consequence of lack of education limiting the salience of alternative situations.

Angus and his coauthors of *Quality of American Life* discuss problems of bias, interactions, individual differences, and other possible limitations on interpretation. They used the metaphor of "an exploration into unknown territory [to]

provide benchmark data against which subsequent measurements could be compared."

This area of research—human happiness—became Campbell's research interest for the remainder of his life. In 1978 the National Science Foundation supported another study, and Angus summarized in nontechnical language the results of that study, along with material from four previous national surveys going back to 1957, in his last book, *The Sense of Well-Being in America: Recent Patterns and Trends* (1980).

Angus was a scholar of breadth in social science, recognized and listened to by sociologists and political scientists; he was especially pleased with awards received from diverse fields of social science. In addition to the Distinguished Scientific Achievement Award of the American Psychological Association, he had received the Distinguished Achievement Award of the American Association for Public Opinion Research (1962), the Lazarsfeld Award from the Council for Applied Social Research (1977), the Laswell Award from the International Society of Political Psychology (1980), and a Doctor of Letters, University of Strathclyde (1970).

He was a professor of both psychology and sociology at the University of Michigan, and, as further indication of his breadth, he was appointed, beginning in 1964, as a lecturer in the Law School, where he taught a seminar on sociolegal problems to advanced law students. At his home institution, the University of Michigan, he served on innumerable committees, particularly in sensitive situations such as in the selection of presidents and deans and in controversial situations where trust was a major ingredient. One feels the family atmosphere in which he grew up asserted an influence. His home institution honored him with the Distinguished Faculty Achievement Award in 1969 and asked him to deliver the Distinguished Senior Faculty Lecture Series in 1979.

He was asked to serve in many professional activities

where his breadth and judgment were needed. To mention only a few, he was a consultant to the Ford Foundation in Poland and Yugoslavia in 1959, 1960, and 1961; on the Committee on SST-Sonic Boom, National Academy of Sciences, 1964–70; on the Advisory Committee on Consumer Expenditures, Bureau of Labor Statistics, 1960–64; on an advisory group to the Social Security Administration, 1961–64; and served with numerous other groups for the American Psychological Association, the Social Science Research Council, the National Research Council, and agencies of the U.S. government, including the executive office of the president.

One of Angus Campbell's major goals was to bring the findings of social science to the effort to improve the quality of life and human welfare. The catholicity of his research interests, his administrative talent, and his understanding and ability to communicate the results of social research outside the research community contributed greatly to his success in achieving his goal. But his basic personality and deep commitments were also major factors. At first contact he might have seemed a dour Scot, austere and impressive, somewhat forbidding. Yet on even short acquaintance, his warmth, his caring, his objectivity, and his integrity came through; his family was devoted, his friendships were close and lasting, his impact on students and social research strong and important.

I WISH TO THANK Betty Jennings, his secretary for twenty years; Philip E. Converse; Robert L. Kahn; and Adye Bel Evans, librarian, Institute for Social Research, for providing me with biographical material. His wife, Jean W. Campbell, was especially helpful in providing information about his early background.

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