I

The Contours of Political Psychology: Situating Research on Political Information Processing

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The field of political psychology has a long history and a broad purview. It includes – has always included – a wide diversity of theories, approaches, quantitative and qualitative research methods, and verdicts. This is as true today as it has been true historically. There are, therefore, diverse issues and problems that have received long-standing attention in this interdisciplinary field. Yet, despite these many concerns, it is possible to identify some ebb and flow in the extent to which particular paradigms have characterized different research eras in political psychology.

The purpose of this chapter is threefold. First, we will attempt to provide the reader with a very broad (and hence somewhat cursory) overview of the breadth of concerns that have characterized the modern era of research in political psychology. Second, we will identify what we believe are some central trends in the evolution of "defining work" in this subfield. And, third and most important in the current context, we will locate the research reported in this volume within the diversity and central tendencies of broader issues in political psychology. The work reported in this volume is limited in scope, and we want to identify these limitations explicitly. At the same time, we hope to make it clear that by accepting a narrow purview and bringing to bear the considerable intellectual and scholarly energies of some of the best scholars in the field, considerable payoff in depth of knowledge is possible. We think that the papers published in this and a companion volume have realized this potential payoff.

Most recently, William McGuire (1993), a psychologist, characterized the history of political psychology as progressing through "three eras." The first era (1940s and 1950s) he characterized as dominated by

research on personality and culture. The second era, during the 1960s and 1970s, he identified as focused on political attitudes and voting behavior. And, according to McGuire, the third era, of the 1980s and 1990s, is characterized by an emphasis on political ideology and belief systems.

Although such judgments are necessarily subjective and reflect one's perspective on the field, as well as one's own location among the panoply of research agendas included under the rubric of political psychology, we would modify McGuire's topology slightly. In our view, McGuire's demarcation of eras underestimates the continuity of certain issues and theoretical approaches.

It seems to us that political psychology was most certainly dominated by a focus on personality and politics from the 1940s up to and including much of the research conducted as late as the 1960s. The theoretical perspective adopted by most political psychologists of this era is best characterized as explicitly or implicitly psychoanalytic. Certainly this is true of the modern origins of the field in the work of Harold Lasswell, and it is true as well of the adaptations and applications introduced in the middle to late 1960s by scholars such as Robert Lane, James David Barber, and Fred Greenstein. We will identify these developments more specifically in the sections that follow.

A second era began before the emphasis on personality and politics had quite reached its zenith. During this time, many academic psychologists moved away from psychoanalysis and adopted a more Skinnerian or "behavioristic" approach, while research in social psychology began to focus heavily on attitude theory and change. Many scholars of political behavior began to focus heavily on social psychological models of voting in the 1950s and 1960s and also applied these models to political belief systems, mostly in the 1960s. Most of these scholars seem to have identified themselves as "political behavioralists" rather than "political psychologists," and thus two separate but related streams of research developed at this time. These two foci – on personality and politics and on social psychological models of belief systems and voting behavior – were often explicitly linked by scholars in the field, and neither really dominated the research agenda in political psychology in the 1960s.

Political behavioralists' emphasis on quantification coupled with their understanding of scholarly "rigor," however, led them to reject the psychoanalytic orientation that had dominated research on personality and politics (e.g., McClosky 1967). To the extent that they investigated the role of personality in politics, they did so by administering personality inventories and relying on "trait theories" of personality. With a strong focus on attitudes and voting, many of them abandoned the study of

personality and politics altogether,[1] in part because most measures of personality did not predict voting behavior or partisanship, and in part because many of these scholars were more centrally located in behavioral political science departments and did not appear to identify themselves centrally as political psychologists.

During this time, even among those who did identify themselves most centrally as political psychologists, much of the initiative in the field came from social psychologists such as Irving Janis, Robert Abelson, and David Sears rather than from personality and individual-difference psychologists. Thus, by the late 1960s and early 1970s, it was broadly true that the momentum among political psychologists had shifted from the study of personality to the study of belief systems, attitudes, and voting behavior. To be sure, humanistic political psychologists such as Jeanne Knutson (1972), Walter Anderson (1973), and others continued to focus on stages of personality development. Their central concerns, however, shifted from stages of psychosexual development to Piaget's and Kohlberg's work on stages of moral development and Maslow's work on human development and the needs hierarchy.[2] Thus the late 1960s and the first half of the 1970s were characterized by dual paradigms, with the long-term momentum shifting toward the political behavioralists, whose focus and training were perhaps more allied with the concerns of political science than with the subfield of political psychology.

Finally, the third stage of the modern era began to evolve in the 1970s and achieved full flower in the 1980s and early 1990s. It is characterized by a focus on human cognition and information processing, the perspective and agenda represented by much of the work published in this volume and its companion. In part due to the success of the interdisciplinary "cognitive science" revolution, social psychology turned away from an almost exclusive focus on attitude theory to a strong emphasis on social cognition. Social psychologists began to study very precisely how people perceive, store, process, recall, and use information from their social environment. In turn, then, political psychologists began to turn their attention to how people similarly deal with information about their political world. This eventually led to a paradigm shift in political psychology, with the concept of "schema theory" replacing temporarily the concept of "attitude theory," although the debate about new wine in old bottles

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1 For example, a 1972 collection of articles on public opinion and political attitudes had no articles on personality and politics. See Nimmo and Bonjean (1972).

2 Wilcox (1974) published a collection of articles on public opinion and political attitudes that had a section devoted to "traits." In that collection only Knutson's (1974) analysis of Maslow focused on personality.

continues (Conover and Feldman 1991; Kuklinski, Luskin, and Bolland 1991; Lodge and McGraw 1991; Miller 1991).

The era when an emphasis on political information processing dominated the agenda evolved slowly during the 1980s, in part because the training of many political scientists studying political behavior continued to be mostly within political science rather than within the more interdisciplinary field of political psychology. Those with interdisciplinary training picked up more rapidly on the new emphasis on social and political cognition.

The pace with which political science began to pay attention to recent developments in political and social cognition was quickened by two factors. The first was the continuing debate about ideological constraint and belief systems. This amplified the appeal of work in political cognition, which focused on how people actually process and store political information and how they make decisions, rather than on identifying how they do not store information and how they do not make decisions. Secondly, at about the same time, political science became enamored of economic models of politics, including political economy and rational choice. During the late 1980s, it became increasingly evident that there were fundamental contradictions between evolving work in political cognition and the increasingly popular rational choice models of politics. This heightened political scientists' interest in the cognitive science revolution and led more mainstream political scientists to pay attention to developments in political psychology. It became apparent by the early 1990s that political psychologists presented one of the major critiques of rational choice theory, as well as alternatives to it. The work of Quattrone and Tversky (1988), Simon (1985), Rosenberg (1995), Monroe and Maher (1995), McDermott (1998), Green and Shapiro (1994; but see Friedman 1996), and others identified fundamental empirical weaknesses underlying the assumptions of most rational choice models of politics. In addition, the careful work of the Stony Brook School and others on political cognition identified how people actually process political information and make political judgments, while David Sears (1993) and his colleagues (Sears, Hensler, and Speer 1979; Sears, Lau, Tyler, and Allen 1980), George Marcus (1988), and Roger Masters and Dennis Sullivan (1993) broadened our understanding of political decision making to include affect and symbolic reactions, neither of which have been properly addressed by rational choice models.

Though it too was slow to incorporate the role of affect into models of political judgment, the political cognition literature in recent years has increasingly elevated the importance of affect. Marcus and MacKuen (1993) argue that citizens' affective judgments enhance the efficiency of information processing during campaigns. Distinguishing

between positive and negative emotions, they show that anxiety stimulates political learning, while enthusiasm spurs campaign involvement. Similarly, Nadeau, Niemi, and Amato (1995) find that the interaction of anxiety and an expectation of success increases issue importance, which, in turn, promotes political learning. The influence of affect has also been demonstrated in work on political tolerance (Marcus, Sullivan, Theiss-Morse, and Wood 1995). In particular, individuals' emotions, when coupled with perceptions of threat, lead to greater intolerance. Political psychologists have shown increasing care in distinguishing between cognitive and affective dimensions of political thought. Such distinctions have been critical in recent analyses of political conceptualization (Just, Crigler, and Neuman 1996), candidate evaluations (Lavine, Thomsen, Zana, and Borgida 1998), and social policy opinions (Nelson 1999). With its emphasis on both affect and cognition, political psychology has contributed to a richer understanding of political decision making.

Rather than simply asserting the primacy of one approach over the other, a promising line of inquiry has begun to search for ways in which psychology-based and rational-choice models of decision making might be reconciled. We wish to highlight three such studies. Through the development of his "serial shift" concept, Jones (1994) formulates a model that is potentially consistent with both approaches. By positing fixed preferences, Jones allows individuals to behave rationally within a single decisional domain. Since attentiveness to preferences shifts by decisional context, he argues, individuals may also display the response instabilities so commonly found in studies of framing. In his analysis of impression formation, Bianco (1998) argues that rational choice and political psychology are not necessarily incompatible. By formalizing models in which individuals behave as either rational actors or motivated tacticians, Bianco actually finds that both models yield identical predictions about impression formation in campaigns. The two approaches produce, as the title of his article claims, "different paths to the same result." A final example is Chong's *Rational Lives* (2000). Chong incorporates individuals' psychological dispositions and their rational calculations of expected utility into a single model designed to inform our understanding of political norms and values.

In short, then, we have characterized the modern development of the field of political psychology as one whose emphasis has gradually shifted from personality and politics, to political attitudes and beliefs, and then to political cognition and information processing. In turn, there is evidence of an evolving emphasis on the role of affective factors in politics.

It is clear, however, that although these overall developments may indeed be discerned, no new development has entirely supplanted previous foci of interest. Thus, work on personality and politics continues,

evolves, and changes its theoretical focus (e.g., Altemeyer 1996; Doty, Winter, Peterson, and Kemmelmeier 1997; Feldman and Stenner 1997); research on political attitudes and beliefs does not always, even today, emanate from the new perspectives generated by research on human information processing; and many political behavioralists have not been informed and/or persuaded by the newer paradigm.

With this as a backdrop, we will proceed to describe the diversity of recent work in political psychology, and thus to locate properly the work published in this and the accompanying volume. We will discuss the history of the field within a broader framework of presenting and discussing theoretical approaches, including early and contemporary examples.

PSYCHOANALYTICALLY BASED APPROACHES

Psychoanalytic approaches to politics owe a great intellectual debt to Harold Lasswell (1948). Lasswell argued that Freud's theory, applied to politics, meant that scholars should not take stated reasons for political action at face value – not primarily because there are hidden *political* agendas, but because political motivations, like all motivations, are deeply *human*. As such, motives for political action are obscure not only to most observers but also to the actors themselves. Political action is, in Lasswell's view, aimed at self-gratification or aggrandizement but is disguised and rationalized as public-spirited. Comprehending both of these realities requires considerable psychological insight.[3]

Others have built on Lasswell's theoretical approach in two main ways. First, some scholars apply psychoanalytic theory to the analysis of selected political leaders on the assumption that the roles played by these leaders are politically so powerful, and their own actions so consequential, that understanding how individual leaders function psychologically

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3 Recent research in the psychology of memory and the relationship between memory for information and social judgments and evaluations has heavily "cognitized" but basically left unaltered the profound psychoanalytic insight that people are often unaware of the reasons for their preferences. Individuals' self-reports for these reasons instead "focus on explanations that are salient and plausible. The problem is that what seems like a plausible cause and what actually determines people's reactions are not always the same thing" (Wilson and Schooler 1991:182). People appear to be much better "rationalization actors" than rational actors, a point made nearly a century ago by Graham Wallas (1908; see also Plous 1993). In addition, recent advances in techniques for measuring implicit memory (as opposed to explicit memory, such as memory that is tested in recall and recognition tasks) have brought cognitive psychology closer to Freud's realm than perhaps many political psychologists realize (see von Hippel, Jonides, Hilton, and Narayan 1993).

will provide tremendous analytic leverage. Much of this work is weak and overly psychological, with little acknowledgment of the synergy provided by the political context. Not all psychological predispositions are acted out the same way in different political contexts, and the nature of the times limits not only the psychological predispositions of the actors themselves, but also how these predispositions work their political effects.

In any case, psychobiographies such as Langer's (1972) secret report on Adolf Hitler, done for the Secret Service during World War II, are purely psychoanalytic and almost completely reductionist. They are fascinating to read and they provide considerable nonintuitive insight into the character of the leader under analysis, but they show very little political sophistication.

Alexander and Juliette George's (1964, 1998) analysis of Woodrow Wilson is an example of a psychobiography that is psychoanalytically based but is not merely psychoanalytic.[4] Political and psychological insights coexist. Wilson's characteristic defense mechanisms – reaction formation and projection, to name two – are described within explicit political contexts that explain why they are manifested, as they apparently are, under some political circumstances but not others. The Georges ently are, under some political circumstances but not others. The Georges also recognize explicitly a primary valid use of psychobiography – to explain political actions that we have difficulty comprehending if we rely solely on conventional political explanations and theories. The puzzle they address is why Wilson failed to obtain Senate ratification of the League of Nations Treaty when, by conventional political standards, he should have succeeded. More specifically, why did he fail to compromise when he reasonably could have had most of what he wanted by demonstrating a modicum of flexibility? Wilson's rigid approach and his self-righteousness tipped the Georges that something nonobvious and psychological was probably involved.

Finally, relying on the psychology of adaptation, which has psychoanalytic roots but is grounded much more in the language of everyday discourse, James David Barber (1992) takes psychobiography into the commercially successful realm of topologies. Perhaps even more than the Georges, Barber relies on the nature of the times and the political context of individual leaders' experiences to depict the interaction between psychological predispositions, on the one hand, and political, institutional, and historical imperatives, on the other.

Psychoanalytically based theories have been applied to the analysis of ordinary citizens as well as political leaders, exemplified by the in-depth

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4 For a psychobiographical analysis of a more recent president, see Renshon's (1995, 1996) studies of Bill Clinton.

clinical research conducted by Robert Lane (1962, 1969). Lane examined the links between consciousness and political thinking, studying how ordinary human needs are translated into political ideologies. Carrying on Lasswell's tradition, he argues that political attitudes and ideologies do not merely express one's economic self-interest or one's sense of civic virtue, but rather are formulated by a complex interaction between our character, as shaped in the family, and the life circumstances (including, of course, economic as well as psychological ones) that we face during adulthood. Much of what constitutes these circumstances is political, and is connected to the interface between (individual) economic and political success and failure.

Finally, psychoanalytic theories and their derivatives have been applied to politics in the study of war, enmification, and peace-making. Much of this work is recent and represents a research arena where the theoretical focus of the first era survived fairly intact and now coexists with the newer approaches and foci of the second and third eras. Vamik Volkan, Sam Keen, and Ervin Staub, for example, have noted the almost universal tendency either to have or to create political enemies. Volkan (1988) provides an explicit psychoanalytic interpretation of the psychogenic process by which this tendency may reflect a universal need. He traces the deepest origins of enmification to stranger anxiety, a rather universal occurrence in children (at about eight months of age) that produces one's sensing another as a bad presence. By about age three, the child, under the influence of the family, begins to select targets to externalize his or her unintegrated black-and-white self, and projects images, good and bad, onto objects in the environment. The particular targets selected to serve as good versus bad objects are often determined by ethnicity and nationality. Later, the child's identification with peers, parents, leaders, and teachers leads to a fuller identification with their religion, ethnicity, nationality, and so on. This unconscious urge to be like similar others contributes to the crystallization of the concepts of "ally" and "enemy." Volkan further argues that if one has multiple identifications, the sense of self suffers and there may be less crystallization of the concepts of ally and enemy. If there are no suitable targets of externalization, both positive and negative, then the child will lack the ability to protect and regulate a sense of self. The need to have enemies – as well as allies – thus develops quite naturally from the normal development of identification. Volkan then applies his theory to ethnic and national political conflict, a timely political issue in the last years of the twentieth century.

Keen (1986) also takes a psychoanalytic approach. Drawing on Jungian psychology, he illustrates how individual psychological processes of enmification can be aggregated to characterize entire societies. Staub (1989) identifies how the psychological dispositions and processes of

enmification can predispose societies toward political genocide. He situates these psychological tendencies within broader historical, economic, and political contexts that interact to increase the likelihood that such atrocities will actually occur. He argues that difficult life conditions – particularly economic conditions and political changes that frustrate basic goals and needs – play a catalytic role in political genocide. So also do cultural and social characteristics, particularly a national sense of superiority that is coupled with self-doubt, and an exaggerated sense of respect for and obedience to political authority. Finally, authoritarian political structures play a central role. Within this context, Staub identifies and describes in some detail the psychological characteristics and processes that not only predispose some individuals to acts of extreme political aggression, but also allow the aggression to occur even when psychological predispositions are absent. His analysis is fully contextualized yet general, psychological yet sensitive to social, economic, and political preconditions. He also draws on a much broader range of psychological theory and research, reaching well beyond psychoanalytic approaches.

Enmification and political genocide raise profoundly difficult questions that require interdisciplinary research strategies. To understand the complex issues involved in recent genocides – such as those in Cambodia, Argentina, Turkey, and the former Yugoslavia, not to mention Nazi Germany – we need to practice methodological eclecticism, to draw on multiple theoretical foci, and to synthesize work on individuals and political institutions. A collaboration between psychology and political science is required. During the twentieth century, there may have been an explosion of technical knowledge and rationality, but it also was characterized by more state-supported genocide than in any comparable period. Why and how so many good and ordinary people are able to become bystanders or even perpetrators of torture, terrorism, and genocide is an urgent question of the greatest importance – and psychological as well as political explanations are required for any attempt at a comprehensive answer.

In summary, although psychoanalytic theories characterized the mainstream of the first era in the development of modern political psychology, they have not been abandoned entirely. There has not been much mainstream research on American political behavior that either focuses on psychoanalytic strategies or assesses the role of personality in politics, but, as we have noted, they persist in other areas of research.

Other approaches to political psychology draw on personality and dispositional theories quite different from psychoanalysis. Before her death, for example, Jeanne Knutson (1972, 1974) applied humanistic psychology – particularly Abraham Maslow's theory of the development of

human needs – to the analysis of political behavior. Others, including Anderson (1973), followed suit, but among the approaches applying humanistic psychology to politics, perhaps only Ronald Inglehart's (1977, 1990, 1997; Abramson and Inglehart 1995) has had a lasting impact on mainstream political science. His translation of Maslow's theory of human needs into a political theory of the development of post-material values has generated considerable research and controversy. Whether it is better to examine the political impact of postmaterial values using solely political approaches, or to examine psychological explanations as well, is hotly debated. From our perspective, it seems obvious that the additional leverage provided by an analysis that incorporates both approaches can only improve our understanding of these social and political developments. That a psychological approach by itself is insufficient is a claim with which we agree.

Finally, other dispositional approaches have provided insights into the impact of personality on political behavior and attitudes without adopting a fully psychoanalytic perspective.[5] For example, McClosky (1967) has written a number of significant papers relating political attitudes to personality characteristics such as anomie, self-esteem, dogmatism, and so on. Sniderman (1975) found a strong relationship between political tolerance and self-esteem, a finding corroborated by Sullivan, Piereson, and Marcus (1982) and McClosky and Brill (1983). These studies are concerned with issues such as leadership recruitment, political involvement, and support for civil liberties, and they have examined simultaneously the role of social, psychological, and political factors in determining individual levels of tolerance. They have also considered the broader political implications of the individual-level findings.

DEVELOPMENTAL AND SOCIAL LEARNING APPROACHES

Beginning with the earlier work of Richard Merelman (1969) and R. W. Connell (1971), and continuing more recently with the work of Timothy Cook (1985) and Shawn Rosenberg (1988; Rosenberg, Ward, and Chilton 1988), political psychologists have applied theories of cognitive and moral development to the political realm.[6]

For the most part, the best works in the now moribund field of political socialization have been in this genre. They draw on Piaget's research on genetic epistemology and Lawrence Kohlberg's on moral development to understand how the structure and content of political thought

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5 Work on the authoritarian personality will be mentioned later.
6 The oldest coauthor of this chapter even taught a graduate-level political science seminar in 1973 entitled "Developmental Psychology and Political Behavior."

evolve with maturation and experience. These works have provided new perspectives on political science issues such as how ordinary citizens actually structure their political thinking (Rosenberg 1988) and what role moral development plays in political tolerance judgments (Wagner 1986). An underlying premise of this approach might be that the development of political thought and behavior is an integral part of general human development and that an understanding of the former cannot be divorced entirely from an understanding of the latter. Political behavior and thought are, quite simply, part and parcel of all human behavior and thought.

Political scientists have often adopted the position that unless childhood or adolescent patterns of political thinking and behavior can be directly linked to adult behavior in a sort of one-to-one correspondence, the study of political socialization cannot be justified. If the primacy principle cannot be validated, then the study of political socialization should be abandoned. We think this is an overly narrow viewpoint. Developmental approaches, whether explicitly stage-oriented or not, encourage a process orientation that links the structure and content of thought at one point with the entire web of thought and action that preceded the present. Socialization patterns at the individual level continue throughout the life cycle, and societal patterns change in ways not unrelated to the past. Understanding the present cannot be divorced from a comprehension of the past, both for individuals and for social and political aggregations.

Political psychologists have also relied on social learning theory to examine diverse political issues such as the diffusion of innovations in political campaigns and elections (Hershey 1984), the psychological basis of political authoritarianism (Altemeyer 1996), the emergence of torture among soldiers and citizens working on behalf of authoritarian regimes or terrorists fighting against powerful regimes (Bandura 1990; Haritos-Fatourcos 1988), the social-psychological basis of charismatic leadership (Madsen and Snow 1991), and the socialization experiences that distinguish heroic political rescuers from mere bystanders (Monroe 1996; Oliner and Oliner 1988).

Hershey explicitly takes social learning theory into a deeply political context and relies on it to provide a framework for understanding how successful political tactics and strategies spread from one campaign or campaign organization to another. Tactics that work in one campaign diffuse to others; those that do not go nowhere.

Altemeyer (1996) furnishes a much-needed psychometric updating of work on authoritarianism, which provides a powerful explanation of individual social and political intolerance toward unpopular and non-conformist groups and ideas. Unlike earlier scholars, Altemeyer places

authoritarianism in a social context and takes it out of the realm of psychoanalysis, viewing it as an attitude cluster with social roots and political consequences.

Madsen and Snow (1991), drawing on Albert Bandura's theory of human coping behavior, develop a conception of charismatic political authority in which the leader's ability to restore individuals' perceived self-efficacy figures prominently. The "charismatic bond" between leader and follower is established when individuals relinquish their own control of events to another – a proxy – who is deemed more able to cope with environmental stresses. Because such bonding is psychologically reliev-ing, individuals experience strong positive affect, reinforcing their com-mitment to the leader. The restoration of efficacy is thus the basis for charismatic leadership, a hypothesis Madsen and Snow (1991) test with a case study of Juan Peron's rise to power in Argentina.

Finally, the Oliners (1988) analyze social, psychological, and political reasons why some gentiles risked their lives to save Jews during World War II and why some remained bystanders (see also Monroe 1996). What is the role of acquiescence in encouraging perpetrators of extreme political aggression? What allows some individuals to break out of the mold of compliance with unjust authority? Surely, the answers to these important questions require a blend of social, historical, psychological, and political analysis. Putting psychological tendencies into a full context such as the Holocaust provides an opportunity to contextualize psycho-logical approaches to political questions.

Developmental and social learning approaches have been applied to a wide variety of political questions, in a variety of ways, some more explicitly political and contextual than others. These research approaches were introduced during the second era in the development of political psychology. Developmental approaches became central to the study of political socialization, which has since faded as a central concern in political science and political psychology. Social learning approaches were introduced to political psychology after learning theories sup-planted psychoanalysis among academic psychologists. They have con-tinued to play a role during the third era, as evidenced by the recency of research such as Altemeyer's and the Oliners'. In both of these cases, social factors were seen as supplanting the central role of personality in influencing both political authoritarianism and political altruism.

When one reads this variety of research in political psychology, one begins to develop new insights into old questions, to appreciate and understand the importance of some questions that more purely "politi-cal" political scientists might not be asking, and to realize the seamless nature of the connections among political contexts, psychological prin-ciples, and political and psychological theories.

SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGICAL APPROACHES

Although often overlooked in reviews of social psychological approaches to the study of politics, research focusing on conformity in politics is actually quite informative and germane. Beginning with the studies of Sharif and Asch, experimental social psychologists have studied the power of conformity in group settings. Today, the findings generated by the conformity paradigm have been examined within vastly different political contexts, generating new contextual theories of political psy-chology and sociology.

Noelle-Neumann (1984), for example, studying mass society and pol-itics in Germany, discovered what she called the "spiral of silence" – a phenomenon whereby those on one side of a major political issue per-ceive that the tide of history and politics is turning against it and in favor of its opponents, who also understand this. The consequence is that the former silence themselves, while the latter are assertive and speak out, thereby exaggerating the size and power of the latter group and reinforcing the impression of their inevitable victory. Noelle-Neumann conducted a series of studies on the German electorate to determine the etiology of the spiral of silence and attributed it to the fear of social isolation, ruling out alternative explanations such as a bandwagon effect (but see Mutz 1998 for an alternative mechanism to explain shifts in opinion).[7] Because the fear of social isolation appears to be widespread, if not universal, the spiral of silence is a general social and psychological phenomenon. It applies to issues of fashion, fame, and even college-age drinking (Prentice and Miller 1993), as well as politics. Noelle-Neumann's explanation for it is largely social-psychological. Yet it is of the utmost political relevance, and the circumstances under which it occurs or is suppressed can only be explained by a combination of political insight and social-psychological awareness.

The effects of majority opinion in shaping individuals' opinions have recently been demonstrated through contextual analysis of political com-munication at the county and dyadic levels. Huckfeldt, Beck, Daltow,

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7 Mutz (1998) provides an integrated theoretical framework that explains the multiple mechanisms through which impersonal influence shapes mass opinion. She suggests that only the very well informed have the capacity to engage in ratio-nal calculations of expected utility, while the uninformed rely on heuristic pro-cessing. The vast majority of individuals, she argues, do not fit at either end of this information spectrum. Consequently, she concludes, a cognitive response model provides the most appealing explanation of the process through which collective opinion shapes individuals' judgments.

Levine, and Morgan (1998) posit that political communication often involves ambiguous political messages. Such ambiguity, they argue, encourages people to employ "contextually-based cognitive shortcuts" when evaluating this information. Though cast in Bayesian terms, their model clearly reflects the influence of research on individuals' cognitive processes. Since the distribution of preferences in macroenvironments (counties) affects the distribution of preferences in microenvironments (discussion networks), members of political majorities are more likely to encounter others with similar political beliefs. Additionally, since perceptions of discussants' preferences are influenced by the perceived composition of microenvironments, members of political majorities are more likely to think that people agree with them even if they do not. The reverse is true for members of the minority. In sum, the authors conclude that the use of inferential devices or judgmental heuristics such as the "personal experience heuristic" creates a political bias that sustains majority opinion.

While Noelle-Neumann, Mutz, and Huckfeldt et al. examine conformity at the societal or local level, Janis (1982) examines it in elite decision-making groups. He discovers how the need to maintain ingroup esprit de corps, and the tendency of highly cohesive groups to discourage dissent by means of various social and psychological mechanisms, can lead to disastrous foreign policy decisions. Janis (1982) finds tendencies toward political conformity among the elites that can be very similar to those found among ordinary citizens. Clearly, other purely political explanations are available for the fiascos studied by Janis – particularly the Bay of Pigs, his prototype. But, as in the case of Woodrow Wilson and the Georges, purely political explanations are inadequate to explain the rather massive nature of the miscalculations involved. The extent to which obvious and critical information was known but ignored during the decision making leaves ample space for psychological explanations to emerge preeminent. Similar issues have also been addressed in the literature on obedience to law (Gamson, Fireman, and Rytina 1982; Tyler 1990).

A better-known genre of social psychological theories applied to political analysis is the one dealing with political attitudes. It includes cognitive dissonance, schema theory, attribution theory, self-perception theory, and other aspects of research and theory in social and political cognition and information processing. In the 1960s and 1970s, scholars such as Jervis (1976), Holsti (1967), and De Rivera (1968) applied social-psychological attitude theory to foreign policy decision making, while others, including the authors of the *American Voter*, constructed attitude models to explain public opinion and voting behavior.

Deborah Larson (1985) has outlined the elements of five social psychological theories most pertinent to elite decision making: attitude change theory, cognitive dissonance theory, attribution theory, self-perception theory, and schema theory. She tries to construct alternative historical records based on these five theories, and then compares and contrasts these hypothetical records with the actual history of how the containment policy evolved. She then assesses which theory fits the record best. Larson concludes that self-perception theory provides the best fit. The central question addressed – for example, what explains foreign policy decision making with regard to the U.S. cold war containment policy? – is of immense concern to political scientists, and Larson's analysis is deeply political and historical, as well as social and psychological.

Finally, most of the burgeoning "mass political cognition" literature falls under the rubric of social psychological attitude theory. In the area of mass political behavior and attitudes, there has been a virtual *explosion* of recent work relying on social psychological theory, methods, and findings. While there are numerous examples of this type of work, we focus on four different types of political cognition research: (1) work that makes use of ideas about knowledge structures (e.g., cognitive categories and schemas); (2) the on-line model of political information processing; (3) priming and accessibility; and (4) dual-process models.

Research on schema theory, attitude availability, accessibility, and priming has provided new perspectives on old questions in the political behavior field. The old "attitude constraint" argument and perspective have been largely abandoned, in part because political scientists are weary of the debate and in part because work on schema theory and attitude accessibility has outdated it. We no longer argue about whether ordinary citizens are "ideological" or whether they hold "constrained beliefs." Instead, we ask how political attitudes and values are structured, and how they affect political behavior and elections. Conover and Feldman (1984), for example, use Q-methodology to assess how political attitudes are structured given that they are not generally organized into tight nodes of liberalism or conservatism. Research by Lodge and Hamill (1986), Lau (1989), and Miller, Wattenburg, and Malanchuk (1986) suggests that by examining the structure and content of citizens' political schemas, we can draw on generalized knowledge of schema theory better to understand how political knowledge structures are used by citizens to evaluate issues, candidates, and partisanship. (See our other chapter in this volume for a more detailed discussion.) Others have investigated how information about political candidates is stored and structured in individuals' memories (McGraw and Steenbergen 1995) and

whether such cognitive organization might be affected by multicandidate contexts (Rahn 1995).

Milton Lodge and his colleagues (Lodge, McGraw and Stroh 1989; Lodge, Steenbergen, and Brau 1995; McGraw, Lodge and Stroh 1990; McGraw and Pinney 1990), in a series of political cognition experiments, examine the applicability of two different information processing models of judgment formation. The on-line/memory-based distinction, while somewhat oversimplified (see Hastie and Pennington 1989; Lodge 1995), was developed in the social cognition field to integrate a wide range of studies that explore the links between memory for information about a stimulus object and the generation of summary impressions and evaluations about that object. A convincing demonstration of the role of memory in such judgments proved to be elusive; many studies in social cognition had documented a surprisingly weak link between memory and evaluations. The on-line/memory-based distinction was developed in social cognition in order to provide a theoretical understanding of the conditions under which it could be expected that judgments would be based on the specific contents of memory for the stimulus object, or when such judgments had their basis in a "pre-stored" running evaluation, so that generating summary impressions does not require the retrieval of specific information about the stimulus object.

Using political candidates, public policies, or political attitudes on matters such as tax compliance (Scholz and Lubell 1998; Scholz and Pinney 1995) as the target of evaluations, the Stony Brook scholars consider the utility of these two models to characterize political information processing. Their studies suggest that judgments about political objects may have on-line components, at least for the more sophisticated, interested, and experienced members of the public.

Another important area of application of social cognitive ideas is the research that makes use of ideas about priming or the accessibility of cognitive categories. The accessibility literature in political science covers a range of topics. Perhaps best known is the application of the priming hypothesis to the study of the role of the media in citizens' evaluations of presidents (e.g., Iyengar and Kinder 1987; Krosnick and Brannon 1993; Krosnick and Kinder 1990). These notions have also been applied to the study of the role of self-interest and sociotropic judgments (Mutz 1992; Young, Thomsen, Borgida, Sullivan, and Aldrich 1991), the determinants of vote choice (Lau 1989; Mendelsohn 1996), political persuasion (Mutz 1998), and political attitude importance (Krosnick 1990). Research has also shown that the utility of partisan or ideological orientations in judgment situations is conditional on the accessibility of those orientations (Huckfeldt, Levine, Morgan, and Sprague 1999). All

of these applications have extended our understanding of long-standing issues in political behavior.

And finally, students of political behavior have been making use of ideas drawn from the dual-process models of information processing. Dual-process ideas have their origins in the social cognition research on schemas and other cognitive structures. As it became increasingly clear that the "cognitive miser" metaphor was inappropriate for some people in some situations, social psychologists attempted to formulate more general models of information processing that allow people more flexibility in their cognitive strategies. Given insufficient motivation or high information processing costs, people may behave as if they were cognitive misers. Given incentives to perform well (either socially or individually induced) or low cost barriers, people may follow more resource-consuming processing strategies. The "motivated tactician" (Fiske and Taylor 1991) metaphor has been formalized into a variety of dual-process models. Several researchers in political science have used these models as inspiration for the study of attitude formation (Mondak 1992), attitude change (Peffley and Hurwitz 1992), the role of party images in candidate evaluations (Rahn 1993), the conditional importance of racial stereotypes (Hurwitz and Peffley 1997; Peffley, Hurwitz, and Sniderman 1997), and the counterfactual reasoning abilities of political elites (Tetlock 1999).

Another advance brought about in part by work in political psychology is the reassessment of the "minimal effects" hypothesis about the mass media. When the oldest coauthor of this chapter was in graduate school, the political effects of the media were summarily dismissed as intuitively important but scientifically untenable. Iyengar and Kinder's (1987) work has shown not only that the media have more than minor effects on the political agenda, and on political evaluations and choices, but more specifically how these effects work through priming and framing (Iyengar 1991). As noted by Bartels (1993), measurement error has often hindered nonexperimental efforts to document media effects. In recent years, however, researchers using nonexperimental data have demonstrated the effects of media exposure on individuals' policy and candidate preferences (Dalton, Beck, and Huckfeldt 1998; Zaller 1996), vote choice (Mendelsohn 1996), and economic evaluations (Hetherington 1996). The attitude accessibility paradigm illustrated by these research projects may even hold some promise for integrating the political science literature on media effects, political campaigns and elections, and voting behavior and public opinion (Jacobs and Shapiro 1994; Lavine, Sullivan, Borgida, and Thomsen 1996; Shaw 1999). Accessibility, however, is by no means the only mechanism that can explain media effects. Media frames can influence public opinion by increasing

the salience of certain information rather than merely making it more accessible (Druckman 1999; Nelson, Clawson, and Oxley 1997; Nelson and Kinder 1996).

Finally, social psychological theory and research on affect and cognition, the development of group identifications, and stereotyping and prejudice have been used explicitly in attempts to understand and explain political intolerance (Kuklinski, Riggle, Ottati, Schwarz, and Wyer 1991; Marcus et al. 1995; Theiss-Morse, Marcus, and Sullivan 1993), ethnic and religious political conflict (Bar-Tal, Graumann, Kruglanski, and Stroebe 1989; Granberg and Sarup 1992), and international bargaining and negotiation (White 1986). Much of this literature has been both political and psychological, as well as explicitly directed at political action and change, more so than most straight political science scholarly attempts to analyze related topics.[8]

Social psychology theory and methods have thus characterized the second and third eras discussed earlier. Although mainstream research has evolved from the structure and content of attitudes to the psychological mechanisms by which citizens perceive, store, and process political information, other streams of research have continued to rely on other approaches from social psychology. The research reported in this volume is largely mainstream work that characterizes the latter years of the third era and may presage the development of a fourth, with greater emphasis on affect and a more balanced conception of the role of political cognition in shaping political decision making and behavior.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The point of our selective but broad overview of psychological approaches to political analysis was to illustrate the diversity both of the psychological models employed and of the political questions that these models have addressed; to identify significant trends in the field; and thus to help locate more carefully the work represented in this volume.

Among the diverse themes represented historically and currently in research agendas included under the rubric of political psychology, the chapters represented here fit squarely within the mainstream represented

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8 The scholars who have adopted psychological approaches to political problems such as ethnic and national relations, and intergroup bargaining and conflict, have often attempted to enact political change to deal with problems of racism, ethnic and national hostility, and education. There are a large number of national and international conferences directed toward such goals, using political psychology as a base for political action.

by the third era and the evolving fourth era, if there is one. Overall, although the work in this volume reflects one of the major research streams in modern political psychology, much is left out. In attempting to achieve our explicit purposes, we also hope we have addressed the political importance and centrality of the questions that political psychologists are addressing, in this volume and elsewhere. We also hope we have made an implicit case for interdisciplinary research, because it often addresses questions and research agenda that strict disciplinarians do not consider central. At its base, human behavior is not parceled out precisely the way American academic social scientists have organized their fields of study. The most fruitful ways to understand what we may call "political" or "economic" or "social" questions are not necessarily limited to "political" or "economic" or "social" theories, concepts, or approaches.

We believe that all types of knowledge – psychological, social, political, and economic – as well as individual, institutional, and aggregate – are important and add to our understanding of politics, just as they add to our understanding of the broader human endeavor. We suspect that some of the most intriguing research being done today is interdisciplinary, and that our institutional structures are beginning to recognize this and even encourage it.

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