

**Theorizing political psychology:
Doing integrative social science under the condition of
postmodernity**

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ABSTRACT

At the beginning of the 21st century, the field of political psychology; like the social sciences more generally, is being challenged. New theoretical direction is being demanded from within and a greater epistemological sophistication and ethical relevance is being demanded from without. In response, direction for a reconstructed political psychology is offered here. To begin, a theoretical framework for a truly integrative political psychology is sketched. This is done in light of the apparent limits of cross-disciplinary or multidisciplinary inquiry. In the attempt to transcend these limits, the theoretical approach offered directly addresses the dually structured quality of social life as the singular product of both organizing social structures and defining discourse communities on the one hand and motivated, thinking individuals on the other. To further this theoretical effort, meta-theoretical considerations are addressed. The modernist-postmodernist debate regarding the status of truth and value is used as a point of departure for constructing the epistemological foundation for a truly political psychology. In this light, structural pragmatic guidelines for theory construction, empirical research and normative inquiry are presented.

Political psychology, along with the rest of the social sciences, is at a crossroads. In part, this is an internal matter - the result of the exhaustion of existing paradigms. The product of psychological or sociological theorizing of the early and mid 20th century, these paradigms have oriented political psychological research for most of the last fifty years. Of clear heuristic value, they yielded considerable insight into the nature of political thought and behavior. Now however there is an increasing awareness that most of what can be done within these frameworks has indeed been accomplished. In response, there is a call for new direction emerging from within political psychology (e.g., Winter, 2001; Lane, 2001; Monroe, 2001).

At the same time, political psychology is being challenged from without. This is coming from two sources. Most direct is the challenge of contemporary social theory. In the last 20 years, poststructuralist and postmodernist theorists (e.g. Foucault, 1979, 1980; Derrida, 1978; Lyotard, 1984) have challenged the foundational assumptions upon which the social sciences in general and political psychology in particular have been built. They argue that our notions of what is true and real are less a result of some direct (or even mediated) experience of the world and are more a matter of culture. No longer anchored in an objective reality, free-floating truth is a social construction, one that is consistent with the aims and structure of particular groups or societies. What is believed to be true is thus viewed as an exercise not of science, but of power. In this light, most current political psychology, both in its choice of subject matter and its “scientific” method, is regarded as suspect.

Consideration of this academic objection to the current conduct of political psychology leads to the recognition of another basic challenge. Whereas some may regard postmodern and post-structural theories to be specious, a critique that fails to offer workable alternatives, the tremendous growth in popularity these theories have enjoyed over the last fifteen years cannot be

denied. The question is why. Undoubtedly, these theories are a reflection of our times – a period where largely shared (or at least dominant) ways of understanding the world are being called into question¹. Filling the vacuum is a plethora of understandings of the world, some of which are anchored in old or new religions and others that are cultural manifestations of the recently empowered ethnic and racial minorities. In the resulting welter of competing definitions and values, people are either forced to retreat to the shelter of some form of cultural chauvinism or they are left with an amorphous, postmodern world where all value and knowledge is relative. The implicit challenge for political psychology is to offer understanding and normative direction that fully addresses this current state of affairs.

These then are the challenges that a reconstructed political psychology must meet: it must generate a new analytical foundation to guide further conceptualization and research and it must clarify the relationship of that foundation to a normative position. The latter includes the twin tasks of addressing the more trenchant criticisms of the post-structuralists and of providing cultural and political direction for an increasingly multicultural world. In the following, I sketch the direction that I believe political psychology should follow in order to meet these challenges.

Toward an integrative political psychology

Political psychology attempts to make sense of the relationship between the individual as citizen or leader on the one hand and the polity on the other hand in order to explicate the nature of power as it is expressed in individual political behavior and structures of governance. While these concerns have been central in the history of political theory, political psychology as a social science has been something of an intellectual sideshow during the last century. Typically it has borrowed concepts from other fields, rather than generating orienting frameworks of its own. During the first half of the 20th century, center stage here was occupied by a social psychology

struggling against the already entrenched disciplines of psychology and sociology. I nonetheless focus on political psychology because it provides a particularly instructive example of the effort to construct an interdisciplinary social science. The conceptual problems confronted by political psychology are characteristic of those faced by any attempt to do integrative social science and the solutions offered elsewhere have been typically been adopted by political psychologists. In addition, political psychology, with its focus on politics, demands a consideration of issues of value and power, issues that are all too easily marginalized in other interdisciplinary efforts mounted in the name of social psychology. Finally, unlike the sub-discipline of social psychology, political psychology remains quite open to the contributions of social theory.

Early integrative efforts and contemporary reductionist solutions

The interdisciplinary battle for determining how to best make sense of social life had begun in earnest by the late nineteenth century. In the Grundrisse and Capital (1967, 1971), Karl Marx constructed a strongly sociological conception of human affairs in which social life was structured by collective forces. Individuals' beliefs and desires were understood to be derivative, a product of socially structured circumstances. While recognizing the independent status of some individual-level concerns, Emile Durkheim sets these concerns aside when formulating his Rules of Sociological Method (1982). At approximately the same time, the psychological alternative was emerging. For example in Sigmund Freud's psychoanalysis, the largely unconscious affective life of individuals is regarded as the central driving force in human affairs. In works such as Civilization and its Discontents (1930), Freud argues that cultural forms and social organization are best understood not as the causes of individual behavior, but as its outcomes. By the early 20th century, these two positions were incorporated as university departments in the

United States and the disciplines (an ironically appropriate choice of words) of sociology and psychology were created.

This set the stage for attempt to establish a social psychology. Between the two world wars, a number of social scientists regarded the hegemonic position of either sociology or psychology to be clearly inadequate and called for the construction of an interdisciplinary, or more appropriately an integrative discipline, of social psychology. Perhaps most prominent among them were the pragmatists, John Dewey and George Herbert Mead. Their theoretical efforts reflect an awareness that an integrative social psychology would have to consider both the self-constituting qualities of social contexts and their effect on individuals on the one hand and the self-constituting qualities of individuals and their effect on social contexts on the other. Within in this mind, they tried to carve out a middle ground that highlighted the interplay between mind and society in constructing both a social self and establishing social control (e.g., Mead, 1924-5). In a way directly relevant to political psychology, both Mead and Dewey explored the implications of their work for the analysis of democracy (e.g. Mead, 1934; Dewey, 1916).

The pragmatists' effort to establish an integrative social psychology never fully succeeded. Partly this reflects a failure to offer fully non-reductionist theoretical solution. Mead (1924-5; 1934) is an instructive case in point. Mead is very good at characterizing the integration of the individual into a social context and the internalization of the perspective of the other in the construction of the self. This is reflected in the clarity of his discussion of the personally transforming force of socialization processes and the qualities of the "me." However he is far more vague when elaborating the nature of the intrinsic qualities of the individual as agent and the social impact individuals may have. This is evident in the ambiguity of Mead's characterization of that core of personal independence and creative force, the "I," and the paucity of discussion

regarding the potentially transformative effect that individuals may have on the social or political contexts in which they operate. In the end, what Mead offers is in fact a sociological social psychology. The agentive “I” (and with it psychological considerations in general) is allocated a place, but it is a largely unelaborated one.

The attempt to integrate sociology and psychology remains a topic of recurring interest, but efforts of this kind have been largely marginalized. In part this is a result of how the social sciences have been institutionalized in the last seventy years. For the most part, social psychologists have been absorbed into departments of psychology and, to a lesser degree, sociology. Their tendency has been to comply with the disciplinary imperatives (theoretical and methodological) of their home departments. In the relatively few cases where attempts are made to construct an integrative social psychology, the integration achieved typically has been at the cost of reducing either collective considerations to individual ones or individual considerations to collective ones.

A good example of a psychologically reductionist integration (one that has been highly influential in sociology and political science) is offered by neoclassical economics.² The reduction here is that (1) collective phenomena are explained with reference to individual level phenomena, in this case, individual choices and (2) although there is clear recognition that social circumstances affect the substance of these individual choices, there is no suggestion that basic psychological processes such as perception, cognition or decision-making may be significantly affected by socio-historical conditions. This same reductionism is evident in George Homans’ (1961) integration of sociological and psychological concerns in his classic analysis of social behavior. It is also evident in Monroe’s (2001) very recent attempt to offer new direction for political psychology. Although an intended as an antidote to rational actor theory, her alternative,

perspective theory, remains essentially psychological. Its psychological assumptions and focus are different, but processes of self-definition and empathy are still understood as psychological (if not rational) processes whose basic functioning is largely unaffected by social circumstance.³

While reductionist, the foregoing social and political psychologies at least address the relationship between individual attributes and collective circumstances. Most psychologically oriented social psychology does not even do this. Instead, the qualities of individuals are explored without regard to possible socio-historical causes or broad collective or political consequences. A good example this is the experimental research on social cognition, research that has occupied the center state of psychologically oriented social psychology for the last half century. Be it the research on cognitive dissonance on the 1950s and 1960s (e.g. Abelson et al. 1968), the research on attribution of the 1970s (e.g. Kelley, 1973), the research on schema processing (Fiske and Taylor, 1991) or the research on cognitive heuristics (e.g., Tvesky and Kahneman 1985) of the 80s and 90s, the theorizing and the design of research are structured by the assumption that the basic qualities of cognition functioning are universal (and are thus unaffected by socio-historical circumstance) and reflect a disinterest in any implications for society or the political system.

Complementing this psychological reductionism is its sociological equivalent. Where there is clear consideration of psychological phenomena such as cognition or personality, the tendency is to make sense of these in largely sociological terms. A good example, one that has oriented the majority of mainstream American political science, is the seminal work of Talcott Parsons (1964; Parson and Bales, 1955). Parsons shows a serious interest in the structure of personality, however, he conceives of this structure as isomorphic with and ultimately a product of the larger social structure of which the individual is a part. A comparable and more recent example is offered in the work of Jurgen Habermas (1979, 1987). Although he adopts a very

different theoretical approach and focuses on reasoning rather than personality, Habermas views any psychological structure, in this case that of cognition, to be parallel to and derivative of the dominant mode of social communication. Even so, Parsons' and Habermas' efforts are unusual. More commonly, a sociologically reductionist social or political psychology offers a less holistic concept of the individual. Rather than considering the individual as an integrated whole, she is conceived as a collage of socially determined aspects. In this vein, there is a focus on such socially determined attributes of the individual as the roles they perform, the discourses they participate in, or the identities they assume. Insofar as there is an interest in processes, the key concern is how socialization (generally regarded as successful) occurs. Within political psychology, the latter was a dominant focus of research from the late 1950s through the 1970s.⁴

The underlying problem and a first elaboration of a solution

Why have most attempts to integrate sociological and psychological considerations ended in one or another form of reductionism? *In my view, the key obstacle is the orienting presumption guiding these efforts, that there is a single locus or immanent source of direction, meaning and value in human affairs.* For psychology, this is to be found in the cognitive and/or emotional life of the individual. Consequently all the concerns of social science including social interaction, discourse and political institutions as well as subjective thought and personal action must ultimately be interpreted (or described) and, in the last instance, explained with reference to individuals' cognition and affect. For sociology, the source of meaning and value in social life is to be found in culture (alternatively conceived as a system of meaning, a language or a discourse) or in social structure. Thus subjectivity and personal action as well as social interaction and political institutions must be interpreted and explained in these terms. Given this epistemological foundation, the social theorist lacks the basic theoretical framework that would enable her to do

any more than explicate social life in the singular and hence reductionist terms of either a sociology (where meaning and value is collective) or a psychology (where meaning and value is personal).

The implication here is that in order to move beyond the limits of contemporary social and political psychological approaches, a fundamentally new theoretical orientation is required. Such an orientation must recognize that *social life is dually structured, by both thinking, feeling individuals and by socially organized, discursively constituted groups*. It must further recognize that these two sources of structuration may operate in significantly different ways. The qualities or dynamics of either of these two dimensions of social life, individual and collective, cannot be collapsed onto those of the other. Individuals' thoughts and feelings cannot be understood as the simple outcome of socialization/internalization processes nor can the formal qualities of personal meaning and affect be explicated in the terms of prevalent social meanings or values. In complementary fashion, social constructions of meaning and value cannot be explained as the direct result of the intended (or unintended) consequences of individuals' choices nor can they be explicated in the terms of individuals' beliefs and preferences. Recognizing the different qualities and force of the collective and individual structuring of interaction, theorizing must be predicated on the assumption that the meaning, dynamic and value of social exchange may, at any given moment, be constituted and organized in two different ways.

To illustrate, let us consider the much-discussed condition of contemporary Western, particularly American society. Over the last several decades, academics and social commentators have increasingly spoken of the "crisis of postmodernity" (sometimes referred to as "hypermodernity"). The basic claim is that with the advent of late capitalism, rapid technological change, multiculturalism and globalization, more traditional, authoritative, stable and culturally

homogeneous forms of life have broken down. Faced with the ensuing heterogeneity, complexity and fluidity of contemporary life, people are being asked to actively and self-consciously participate with other people in the definition (and likely reconstruction) of their own and others' identities and in the construction of the rules and values whereby their interaction will be regulated. The crisis is that individuals seem to lack the cognitive and emotional resources to respond in the way required. They do not seem to fully understand what is required of them and how to proceed. The result is often discomfort, withdrawal or various minor forms of psychopathology. At the collective level this is reflected in a range of phenomena from the recent popularity of self-help groups to the rapid growth of "regressive social movements" which, in their racism, nationalism or neo-traditionalism, actively reject the trends of postmodern life.⁵

In the present context the interesting feature of this crisis is the difficulty with which it is explained. Adopting a sociological perspective, one assumes that meaning and value are a social construction. Considering the postmodern period, sociologists would try to characterize the distinctive way in which meaning and value are being constructed at this time and to explain this with reference to changes in social structure or forms of discourse (e.g. Lyotard, 1984; Harvey, 1989; Giddens, 1990). In so doing, they may offer a coherent account of what is happening at the collective level, but this does not leave the theoretical space to consider the full nature of the current crisis. The problem here is that the crisis of postmodernity (as I have characterized it) is not essentially a matter of the internal contradiction among collective forces (the kind of crisis suggested by Marx or Foucault). Rather at its core, it embodies the contradiction between collective organization and cultural definitions on the one hand and personal affective orientations and subjective understandings on the other. The sociologist typically assumes that the thoughts and values of individuals are products of socialization and thus are collectively determined. The

difficulty here is the crisis of postmodernity is one in which socialization seems to have failed and individuals' thoughts and values are constructed in a way that resists social determination. As such the very nature of the crisis seems to deny basic assumptions of sociology and therefore the crisis cannot readily be recognized or comprehended in sociological terms.

The psychological perspective does not fare much better than its sociological complement. Like the sociologist, the psychologist is ultimately limited to one level of analysis. Social life is explicated with reference to the subjectively constructed thoughts and values of individuals and their personally directed action. In this light, the current crisis is understood as individual level phenomenon. It is a matter of psychopathology, a breakdown in the coherence or the maintenance of the self that engenders maladaptive and ultimately self-destructive behavior. The problem with this approach when applied to the crisis of postmodernity is that the crisis in question is evidently not one of psychopathology. It does not involve the incoherence of the self or manifest self-destruction. Rather it stems from the individual's battle to maintain her self in the face of a postmodern way of life that threatens the coherence in terms of which that self is constituted. The underlying problem here is not one of the disintegration of the self, but the disjuncture between an integrated self and a dominant social structure or cultural discourse. Given the methodological individualism of their approach and the assumed derivative quality of social life, psychologists cannot address this disjuncture. To the contrary, when addressing the nature and genesis of social life, the tendency is to assume that collective life is an aggregation of individual causes and thus reflects or parallels individual understandings and needs. This is evident in Freudian analysis of civilizing constraints and in the more recent analyses of culture as national character.⁶

The crisis of postmodernity is more easily approached from the more social psychological perspective of dual structuration. From this point of view, the possible disjuncture between collective and individual constructions of meaning or organizations of action is assumed at the outset. Consequently, the basic contours of the crisis of postmodernity are readily understood. There is no need to explain the possibility of such a disjunction. Rather analysis begins with an effort to characterize the present disjunction by describing the quality of the constructions at each level and the nature of the differences or incompatibilities between them. This then opens the door to an attempt to understand when the disjunction is likely to be more or less evident, more or less pronounced and more or less consequential either for individuals or for the social organizations and cultural discourses in which they participate. In the end, a more fruitful consideration of the present crisis may be offered.

Although important, the assumption of dual structuration is not sufficient unto itself for the development of an integrated social psychology. The presumption of the distinctiveness of collective and individual constructions of meaning and value must be supplemented by the recognition that these constructions are necessarily intertwined. Although they are distinct, collective and individual constructions are necessarily realized on the common ground of what people do and say to one another. As a result, each construction impacts the other. This is exemplified by the foregoing discussion of the postmodern condition. It constitutes a crisis precisely because despite their distinctiveness and relative incompatibility, individual level structuration and collective structuration operate on one another. Culture and social organization are reconstructing and reorienting individuals' purposive actions in ways they do not understand and may not anticipate. At the same time, individuals' understandings and action strategies are

reconstructing cultural definitions and reorienting interaction in ways that are inconsistent with prevalent cultural meanings and the requisites of social organization.

In my view, a truly integrative social or political psychology must take this complex relationship between the individual structuring of meaning and action on the one hand and the collective structuring of meaning and action on the other as its point of departure. This relationship is a force unto itself, one that has a reverberating impact on both the personal and collective structuring of action. To begin, the relationship is likely to delimit the forms the personal and the collective make take. Because the individual and collective structures provide the context for each other's realization, each constrains the possibilities of the other. Clearly the opportunities and demands which the social environment places on the individual's interaction with others delimits the kinds of understandings she can construct and the kinds of action strategies she can initiate. This raises important concerns regarding the political and cultural dimensions of cognition and emotion. To illustrate, consider the cognitive consequences of more traditional societies. The former provides the individual with a clear determination of her identity and social position and a single, authoritative set of cultural definitions and guidelines for social action. For example, she is woman, daughter, wife and mother and the requirements of her social action are relatively clearly defined accordingly. The cognitive development required to adapt to such a social situation requires the capacity to recognize concrete patterns of social exchange and the circumstances that determine which patterns will or should be initiated. There is little need or opportunity to develop forms of thinking which are more integrative, abstract or hypothetical.

In complementary fashion, the capacity of individuals to make cognitive connections and respond to demands for action delimits the kinds of institutions or discourses that can be constructed to regulate their interaction. Social structure is designed accordingly. This is

illustrated by the different ways in which groups of children of different ages are organized. Here there is a clear recognition that there are significant cognitive and emotional differences between eleven year olds and college age students, differences that affect how the activity of individuals of the two different age groups can be effectively orchestrated. Considerations such as these suggest interesting questions regarding the social psychological dimensions of institution building and cultural change.

Although the relationship between the individual and collective structuring of social life establishes constraints, it also has the potential to be transforming. In addition to limiting the possibilities for their institutional or cultural regulation, individuals may also create pressure for the transformation of that collective regulation. Insofar as their capacities to cognize and direct action exceed the capacity of social institutions to define and organize action, individuals will regard social rules and definitions as arbitrary and readily manipulated. The result is a likely breakdown in effective social regulation that will in turn contribute to pressures and possibilities for qualitative change in the structure of collective life. As individuals may create pressure for social change from below, so the institutions and discourses of social life may create pressure for individual change from above. Insofar as the individual is confronted with tasks to perform and discourse to participate in which she does not understand and cannot effectively manage, the adequacy of her own construction of meaning and value is likely to be called into question. Given the appropriate circumstances this is likely to foster a qualitative change in reasoning and action. This transformative dimension of the relationship between the individual and the collective opens the door for interesting analysis of the conditions and limits of both personal and societal change.

What is offered here is a direction for a future social and political psychological inquiry. The aim is to construct a supra-disciplinary understanding of the collective and individual aspects

of social and political life. The assumption is that the insights and methods of the separate disciplines of sociology, psychology and political science will have to be reconceived in this light. As suggested at the outset, the development of such a truly integrative social or political psychology requires an epistemological position that can facilitate theorizing about the practical interdependence of subjectivity and culture and thus about the nature of a social life that is dually structured. Existing epistemologies cannot readily do this. Consequently, the attempt to reconstruct political psychology must include the development of an appropriate epistemological foundation. On this basis, clearer guidelines for theorizing and empirical research can be established. As a step in this direction, let us consider issues of truth, value and power as they relate to political psychological theory and research.

Truth and Value in Political Psychology

Here we turn to the challenges to political psychology being issued from without. One challenge, posed by post-structuralists and postmodernists, is that political psychology, like all social science, is not and cannot be epistemologically or normatively neutral. In this view, the analytical concepts and empirical methods of political psychology are not so much a matter of value neutral inquiry into the nature of objective facts as they are a manifestation of the dominant discourses in society. The other challenge, posed by contemporary social life is that even if political psychology is not a source of value, it should be. American society is clearly in transition. Once workable cultural definitions and norms are being questioned and rejected as inadequate. New more adequate ones are yet to be satisfactorily formulated. Caught in a past being superseded and a future still not attained, there are demands at both the level of individuals and the level of entire communities for new moral and political direction.

For the most part, contemporary social and political psychologists have ignored or rejected both challenges.⁷ The prevailing assumption is that their theories and certainly their research methods are value neutral. On this basis, claims of value bias or requests for value direction are typically rejected as misguided or beyond the proper purview of political psychological research.⁸ Whereas such a rather flippant response may have sufficed in the past, I do not think it does so now. The truth/value or science/ideology question is being raised with sufficient strength by sufficient numbers of colleagues (in the social sciences as well as the humanities) that a more considered response is necessary. In addition, the times in which we now live are uncertain. Globalization, multiculturalism and rapid social change have undermined old definitions and values. New ones are needed in order to help address such questions as what form democracy should take, what lessons our schools should be teaching our children and what values should guide the conduct of our own personal lives. In this environment, a simple refusal to engage criticisms and challenges seriously is politically irresponsible.

I think a good deal can be learned from taking these challenges seriously. Like the issue of interdisciplinary integration, the issues of truth and value in political research provide impetus and direction for a reconstructed political psychology. Here I draw on the preceding discussion of the relationship between sociological and psychological inquiry to address the value concerns of both mainstream modernist social scientists and their postmodernist critics. My aim is not to provide an elaborated statement or critique of these two positions, but rather to use some of the insights that have emerged in the debate to further the effort to develop the epistemological foundation for a reconstructed political psychology and consider its normative implications.

Modernist vs. postmodernist. Cast in the context of current academic debates, mainstream social science is distinguished by the set of epistemological assumptions they adopt.

For present purposes I will refer to this underlying epistemology as modernist. It has its roots in the enlightenment philosophies of Locke, Hume and Mill and the early 20th century positivists such as A.J. Ayer. A key assumption is thought is an attribute of individuals, a reflection of their subjective activity. For the most part, thought is viewed as having two aspects. On the one hand it is representational. Thought mirrors and thereby is connected to an external objective reality to which the individual is exposed. On the other hand, thought is associative or combinatorial. It establishes relations between the elements of reality by juxtaposing them to one another. This may involve active reflection or imagination, or a more passive representation of how elements are observed to be associated with one another in reality. Modernist social inquiry is oriented accordingly. It focuses on the observable relationships among the behaviors individuals perform. Societies are viewed as aggregative phenomena and thus a second order consideration. Empirical efforts are consequently devoted to the reliable and unprejudiced collection of data on how individuals behave. Normative efforts focus on elucidating the essential nature of the individual as an abstract (particularly as abstracted from a particular social or cultural context) entity. The requisites of this abstract nature then define universal human values.

Postmodernists attack the epistemological basis of modernist empirical and normative inquiry. (Given my aims here, I draw primarily on the post-structuralism of Foucault and the postmodernism of Lyotard and Derrida. For convenience of exposition, I refer to the family of concerns articulated by these related positions as postmodernist.) The postmodernists reject modernist assertions that thought is subjective, that it is linked to a distinct objective reality and that it is associative or combinatorial. Instead, they suggest that thought is an intersubjective, self-referential and creative narrative exercise. In their view, thought (or meaning, the more appropriate term in this context) is discursively constructed. Consequently, meaning is less a

function of its connection to an objective reality and more a product of intersubjective negotiation or cultural determination. Disconnected from an external reality, the narratives of socially constructed meaning create their own intersubjectively constituted reality (complete with a definition of the means for exploring that reality) in its place. Oriented by these epistemological assumptions, poststructuralist and postmodernist theorizing abandons a vocabulary of representation, knowledge (or falsifiability) and truth in favor of a language of construction, meaning and relative understanding.

In this frame of reference, empirical research becomes less a systematic effort to observe and order data and more an attempt to interpret the culturally or discursively relative meaning of what is observed. The relationship between observation and theory construction posited by the modernist is reversed. Observation is no longer anchored in the experience of reality and thus a potential basis for rejecting old knowledge or building new knowledge. Rather it is viewed as a manifestation of existing discursively constructed meanings and as a vehicle for defining a reality the participants in the discourse will share. In this light, the theories, empirical methods and normative orientations of the social sciences are regarded as expressions of dominant discourses and therefore as socially and historically relative. Where these theories and methods are brought to bear on other weaker discourses or groups, the result is not enlightenment or productive debate, but rather the mere assertion of power of one discourse or cultural ethos over another.

Learning from the debate. Viewed from the perspective of a political psychologist, both sides of the present debate offer important insight. The modernist view has the advantage of recognizing the importance of the link between thought/meaning and something outside of itself. The postmodernist tendency to obliterate this link runs into all the difficulties and conundrums of early idealist philosophizing. A number of contrapuntal considerations may be raised. For

example, there is the somewhat obvious suggestion that even if we agree we can walk through walls, we will probably find that we cannot. A more subtle and perhaps more intractable move would be to ask how discourses (as internally differentiated and self-referential entities) are ever learned. Within a postmodernist frame of reference, to explain how a language might constitute the understandings of a fluent speaker is a fairly straightforward exercise. However, to figure out how someone who does not understand the language can ever come to use it appropriately is more difficult. Nor should this latter situation be regarded as peripheral or unusual. We should not forget that all competent participants in discourses began (as children) not understanding any language. The latter circumstance suggests that a common feature of all language, its capacity to reach individuals whose understandings are not yet discursively or linguistically mediated, implies the existence of a link or common ground between language and something external to it. Given the circumstance of this discourse-less, language-less learner it is clear that this link must incorporate elements that can only be termed subjective and/or objective in nature.

The modernist social scientific view also has the advantage of recognizing that people do think and do construct meanings and understandings. By suggesting that individuals are not significant contributors to the construction of meaning, postmodernists are put in the untenable position of assuming that people understand what they say in a manner which parallels the discursive or intersubjective definition of they are saying. I would suggest that any person who has engaged in an extended discussion about a significant personal or political topic has observed that discursively constituted meanings are certainly not the only ones operative in conversation. A rejoinder to this might be to acknowledge that discursive meanings may be subjectively reconstructed or distorted, but to claim this is of no social or discursive consequence. Again I would suggest common experience dictates otherwise. The current misunderstandings or

alternative understandings that individuals construct typically have consequences for subsequent moves in conversation or later interaction.

For its part, postmodernism offers important insight into the constructive and pragmatic aspects of thought. Modernist claims that thought is simply associative or combinatorial implies that although the substance of thinking may vary from person to person, its basic qualities do not. For anyone who has taught in a college classroom this is evidently not the case. Not only does what students know vary, but so does the quality of how they know it. Some are clearly capable of thinking about the information presented in abstract, integrative or critical ways. Other students, despite comparable exposure and effort, process the information in a rather concrete, fragmented and largely uncritical fashion. If thinking were merely an act of representation complemented by associative combination, this would be very hard to understand. It becomes more sensible if one views thinking as an activity that produces representations and associations and one recognizes that as the quality of this productive activity varies so will the quality of the representations and associations constructed. This view of thinking as a constructive activity suggests a more complex view of the relationship between reasoning and its object, one in which both contribute to the definition of the quality of the relationships and the elements that constitute understanding or knowledge.

With its emphasis on the social construction of meaning, the postmodernist critique also corrects the overly subjectivist conception of modernist social science. Assuming that thought is only subjective, the modernist is left to conclude that any variation in the quality of thinking is evidence of neurophysiological detriment or disorder. Accounting for difference is a biological question. Postmodernists stipulate that the key pragmatic relationship is an intersubjective and discursively mediated one. If we adopt this postmodernist concern with discourse but do not (as

postmodernists do) eliminate subjectivity, it is clear that the quality of subjectivity, that is the quality of an individual's thinking, is significantly determined by the quality of the discursive exchanges in which she participates. This suggests that differences in thinking across individuals may be accounted for with reference to socio-cultural and linguistic determinants. This in turn requires a focus on collective phenomena and an analysis of differences in forms of discourse and in the quality of cultural meanings that are associated with them (e.g. Habermas, 1990).

The postmodernist concern with the collective production of meaning leads us well beyond the focus on differences in the substance of shared cultural values and beliefs that is characteristic of modernist attempts to address cultural variation.⁹ This is true in two respects. First these values and beliefs are understood to be embedded in narratives and thus are pragmatically defined. They cannot, therefore be described in isolation from one another. Rather they must be interpreted in light of the broader discourse in which they are articulated.¹⁰ Second the modernist perspective assumes that cultural values and beliefs cohere and are broadly shared by the society. Postmodernist views deny this coherence and commonality. Instead they emphasize the conflict among meaning-producing discourses and examines of the relations of power that exist between them.

In this context, we can also address the implications of these epistemological claims for a consideration of value. For the modernist, an epistemological individualism forces an ethical individualism. Like knowledge, value reflects the relationship between the individual and reality. Here however the relationship is reversed. In the value relationship, it is the qualities of the individual, as she relates to reality, which are determining. Thus it is her basic requirements or needs which are conceived as real or true values. Because they are characteristics of the individual qua individual, these values are regarded as universal and cultural formations are

judged with reference to them.¹¹ The postmodernist rejects this individualism suggesting that value, like meaning, is not linked to a reality (psychological or objective), but rather is discursively mediated. Thus value is a cultural construction, a collective (and contested) outcome that shapes the individual's personal sense of what her true needs are.

Our preceding consideration of modern and postmodernist epistemologies suggests both these ethical stances stand as partial correctives to one another. The postmodernist view requires a greater sensitivity to cultural and historical variation in the definition of basic values than is possible within a modernist universal ethic. This demands a greater self-awareness of the source of the values the social analyst is espousing and a greater recognition of the politics involved in the conflict between discursive communities. On the other hand, the modernist anchoring of value in relation to reality (either that of the universal individual or that of the archetypal social structure) provides a basis for ethical critique. In a postmodernist conception where value is wholly artificial and relative, ethical discourse can only be an arena for the assertion of power of one discourse community over another. Nothing transcends this. In this light, even contemporary multiculturalist assertions of the ethical value of allowing each discursive community its voice is only another masked attempt on the part of some (in this case, temporarily allied minorities) to assert power over others. Retaining a link to personal or collective realities, modernism offers a foundation, albeit a insufficiently complex one, for an ethical discourse that may be more than an exercise in power.

In sum, both sides of the debate offer significant insight and each side corrects evident deficiencies of the other. The key epistemological contributions on the modernist side are: (1) its attention to the quality of subjectivity, (2) its emphasis on the coherence (or the tendency to cohere) of subjective constructions, and (3) its recognition of the link between subjective

constructions (or cultural ones) on the one hand and a concrete reality on the other. These also provide the ground for meaningful and critical ethical discourse. The key epistemological contributions on the postmodernist side are: (1) its emphasis on intersubjectivity and discourse, (2) its attention to the conflict among discourses, and (3) its recognition that meaning is self-referential and discursively determined. These provide the basis for recognizing fundamental differences among ethical claims and the political dimension of the conflict between them.

To conclude, I suggest using the contributions of both sides of the debate to guide the construction of an epistemology and ethics that meet the needs of an integrative political psychology. In so doing, it is important to remember that these two perspectives are in general antithetical to one another and their particular claims cannot simply be combined. Rather a third, alternative position must be developed. Effectively this would provide a basis for reconstituting the insights of modernist social science and its postmodern critics in different terms and thus facilitate the incorporation of many of their otherwise contradictory claims.

Structural pragmatics: An epistemological foundation for political psychology

In this section, I sketch the epistemological foundation that is needed to generate the kind of theorizing that can effectively address the orienting concerns of an integrative social science outlined earlier. These include: (1) understanding how social life is dually structured by culture and social organization on the one hand and by cognition and emotion on the other, (2) recognizing that these two structuring forces may differ and therefore that the qualities of each must be analyzed in its own distinctive terms, and (3) explaining how individual and collective structures affect one another. To guide this epistemological effort in way that insures an adequate consideration of issues of value and power, I draw on the insights from the modernist-postmodernist debate. To begin, I adopt a pragmatic conception of thought and its relation to

action. This insures that action is infused with meaning and that meaning is anchored in a reality external to itself. I then introduce structuralist considerations. These have the advantage of addressing the coherence and self-referential quality of meaning and the organization of action in a way that pragmatism cannot. I then integrate these two traditions into a structural pragmatics. This has the advantage of enabling a theoretical account both of the difference between social and personal constructions of meaning or action and of the manner in which these two constructions converge and therefore may conflict. To conclude, I address the theoretical, methodological and normative implications of this foundation for the conduct of political psychology.¹²

Pragmatist and structuralist considerations. Initially an American philosophical enterprise, pragmatism offers an alternative to epistemologies that view thought in terms of representation and define it in largely static terms (Pierce, 1934; James 1907, 1947; Mead (1924-5, 1934), Dewey (1916, 1930). For the pragmatists, “thought” is viewed as “thinking” and the latter is regarded more as an operational activity than a representational one. It is a matter of “knowing how” rather than “knowing that”. In these terms, thinking is purposive, active and action-oriented. It is an operative response to external conditions, one that initiates action (intellectual or physical) in order to achieve some end. In the course of this operation, meaning is constructed. Actions and objects (including an external stimulus, Dewey, 1896) are placed in relation to one another as they are deployed in the attempt either to act on objects in the physical environment or to interact with others in the social environment. In this manner, these constitutive objects and actions of the stimulus and response are subjectively reconstructed as elements of the individual’s purposive activity and each is defined by the particular role it plays.

To illustrate this pragmatic concept of meaning, consider the game of chess. Any particular piece has a specific identity determined by its distinctive appearance and more

fundamentally by the specific manner in which it may be moved. In these terms, we can objectively differentiate a bishop from a knight or pawn, etc. Despite these objective constraints, the pragmatic meaning of the pieces is defined (and redefined) by how they are used relative to one another in the course of the game. Thus in one situation, the way in which a bishop is moved may be a support in an attack, a deceptive maneuver in a feint or a buttress in a defense. Thus the pragmatic meaning of the move depends on the larger purposive activity of which it is a part. Of note, this activity also defines the stimulus to which the move is a response. Thus, if the move were a defensive buttress, the pragmatic context would also constitute the other player's prior move(s) as an attack.

While recognizing the significance of meaning-making, pragmatism also suggests the continuity of the subjective or intersubjective qualities of thought and the objective qualities of action. As a purposive activity, thinking or signifying infuses action with meaning. In a manner suggested by the preceding example, the meanings of actions and objects are tools that are subjectively defined by the individual's pursuit of the task at hand or by the intersubjective definition of the context in which an interaction is taking place. At the same time however the operative quality of meaning-making opens it up to the extra-subjective qualities of action. As an activity oriented to operating on phenomena external to it, the construction of meaning is necessarily intimately related to the objective conditions of action in which this activity is carried through. As the circumstance and the medium of the action to which thinking is oriented, these external conditions contribute to how actions and objects may in practice be interrelated. They thereby help determine how purposive strategies may be formulated or how interactions may be organized and therefore the kinds of subjective or intersubjective connections that may be forged.

As a basis for social inquiry, pragmatism suggests a radically social psychological of interaction and discourse. On the one hand, the pragmatist view suggests that the social arena is populated by purposive thinking actors/subjects who organize and direct their own action and thereby define the meaning of what they do. Consequently, the discourses and the interactions that make up social life are constituted by individuals' subjectively constructed strategies and meanings. On the other hand, the pragmatist view also suggests that the socially regulated conditions of interaction shape individually constructed strategies and aims. These conditions delimit what action can be taken, what consequences will follow and what ends might possibly be pursued. Consequently, the individual's subjectivity and purpose will reflect the substance and the organization of the regularities of social exchange. Overall pragmatism offers the basis of a highly integrative view of social life.

The difficulty here is that view of social life is too integrative. Indeed the sociological and psychological dimensions of analysis tend to collapse on to one another. The underlying problem is that the pragmatically constructed relationships are conceived in overly concrete and particular terms. Pragmatism does not address the formal qualities of the construction of the meaning or the organization of action. Consequently it cannot generate or sustain theory that explicates the coherence of subjective or social constructions or the qualitatively different ways in which these two constructing forces may operate on action in a given social setting. As such it does not provide an adequate epistemological foundation for addressing the orienting concerns of an integrative political psychology.

To address this limitation, I supplement the particularism of pragmatics with the more general and generative considerations characteristic of structuralism. In so doing, I draw on a tradition initiated by the linguistic structuralism of Saussure (1959) and further developed in the

philosophy of Merleau-Ponty (1963) and the anthropology of Levi-Strauss (1966). Structuralist analysis focuses on the formal structures that underlie the apparent organization of mind, language or social life. This leads social inquiry beyond the typical pragmatic consideration of particular subjective strategies, discourses or social regulations. From a structuralist perspective, these more narrow and substantive pragmatic concerns are regarded as epiphenomenal, the manifest expression of some more essential form or underlying structure. This structure delimits the logic and quality of the kinds of connections among actions which may be manifest and, by derivation, the quality of the elements, the individual actions and actors, which are thus connected. Particular action and interactions, even specific subjective strategies and social regulations, cannot be explicated in their own terms. Rather they must be interpreted and explained with reference to their underlying structure.

In structuralist writings, particularly those that follow in the tradition of de Saussure and Levi-Strauss, structure is conceived in singular and rather static terms. It is a form of relationship that is then variously expressed in the particular relationships and patterns of interaction one may directly observe. As such, analysis is oriented by the assumption that a given set of patterns is the effect of a single underlying structure. In addition the formal qualities of a structure are conceived quite independently of the nature of the specific content that it forms. To the degree to which there is a connection between the two, it is unidirectional. Structure determines content. Like a deity, it magically gives form to an otherwise amorphous substantive reality. The content has no reciprocal effect on the structure. As such, structuralism cannot provide an adequate foundation for an integrative political psychology. It does not provide the resources to facilitate a theoretical understanding of how a given interaction might be the product of two structures (individual and social) nor can it provide a basis for understanding how a structure might interact with something

outside itself, in this case a different structure. At best structuralism can yield a theory of how one structure shapes another and thereby reducing it to a reflection of itself.¹³

A pragmatic structuralism. With the aim of developing a non-reductionist political psychology, I reintroduce more pragmatist considerations and focus on the activity of structuration and thus redefine structures in more differentiated and dynamic terms. In so doing, I draw on structural Marxism such as that of Louis Althusser (1971) and more especially on the genetic structuralism of Jean Piaget (1970, Inhelder and Piaget 1956). From this perspective, a structure is a formal system that is itself an elaboration of a process of structuration. Thus structure is itself understood as an outcome of a particular mode of praxis or operation depending on the theoretical tradition being adopted. The structuration process is one that occurs as the structuring mode of operation is realized in the particular actions that are coordinated and done. For Piaget this occurs in the course of actually attempting to operate on things in a personally directed way. For the structural Marxists this occurs in the course of actually regulating social interaction in a manner determined by the mode of production. In either case, the mode of operation or regulation is realized in concrete social exchange. The result is the construction of relationships that have a specific form and include elements that have a related quality to them. In the process, the otherwise indeterminate flow of action is constituted as a structured activity. Formal relationships among elements of a certain quality are thereby defined.

A key consequence of this focus on a mode of structuration rather than on structure per se is that it opens up the formal and virtual quality of structures to the particularity of the substantive reality that they define and organize. In a more static structuralism, a structure is an immanent force that exercises a determining, transforming and constituting force on manifest social realities. The structure is a first cause, it produces effects but itself is unaffected. Therefore structures do

not have history, they exist beneath history and are expressed through it. In this light, Levi-Strauss (1966) can conclude that social inquiry must begin with a concrete historical analysis, but this is only a first step that should be transcended. Alternatively, in a more pragmatic structuralism, the focus is on the process of structuration as the means whereby aspects of a structure are initially produced and then maintained over time. At the same time that the structuring activity of forging connections yields a set of specific substantive relationships, each of these specific relationships constitutes a concrete manifestation of this general structuring activity and as such sustains or reproduces that activity. In this latter regard, the quality and persistence of structures are dependent on the ongoing manner of their realization in the actual making of connections and coordination of action. Thus in the process of structuration, the formal qualities of the structure of discourse and social interaction are immediately related to the concrete nature of what occurs in specific instances. As the former conditions the qualities of the latter, so the latter conditions the qualities of the former.

Dual structuration. This pragmatic embeddedness of structuration in the substance of what is being structured has a number of significant implications for theory construction. Most important, it makes it possible to conceive of how a given set of interactions might be dually structured. A more pragmatic structuralism suggests that substantive realities are not simply a manifestation of a structure, but are operated on by it. They are thus attributed some independent qualities. Given their quasi-independent status, these substantive realities may be subject to additional and somewhat different structuration. This suggests that at any given moment, a particular ongoing interaction may be operated upon by more than one structure.

Using this structural pragmatic conception to frame to address the concerns of integrative social theorizing provides a basis for understanding that a given set of specific interactions or

discursive exchanges may be dually structured. On the one hand, a social interaction is structured by the understandings and purposes of the individuals involved. Each individual engages in the interaction in a manner that is determined by her characteristic mode of coordinating her own actions. This structuring force gets expressed in the quality of the initiatives she directs toward other people and the response that their actions evoke from her. As a result a particular interaction between individuals is subjectively structured. On the other hand this interaction occurs in a larger social context and is regulated accordingly. A social group or society has a characteristic way of coordinating the various social exchanges that occur among the members of the collectivity. Realized in specific social settings, this yields the structure of social relationships and forms of engagement that are characteristic of social life. Specific interactions between individuals are structured accordingly. In sum, the way in which any given social interaction unfolds will be dually structured by the purposive individuals involved and by the larger social context in which they are operating.¹⁴

As the foregoing discussion suggests, individuals and the collectivity are attempting to regulate the same concrete ground, that is the specific ways in which people act on one another. In this manner, these two structuring forces are pragmatically intertwined and therefore are open to each other's influence. The realization of a person's purposes and a validation of her understandings depend on how other people respond. Insofar as the other people's interpretation of the individual's initiative and the manner of their response is socially orchestrated, how the interaction will unfold and therefore how the individual's purposes and understandings are realized will be socially structured. In complementary fashion, the realization of cultural definitions and social organization depends on how individuals can act toward one another. Insofar as a person's action is a product of her understandings and planning capacities, how social

interaction will unfold and therefore how the social definition and regulation is realized will be subjectively structured.

As structural pragmatism makes clear, the fact that structures share a common substantive object (in this case social interaction) does not mean that they necessarily have the same formal quality or operate similarly. As the earlier example of the crisis of postmodernity suggests, they may be quite different. Individuals may define and orient their action in a way that is inconsistent with how the interaction between individuals is culturally defined and socially regulated. At the same time, a collectivity may define and regulate the exchange between individuals in a way that is inconsistent with their personal understandings or purposes. This suggests that as individuals are deconstructing and reconstructing social exchange in their own terms, the collectivity is deconstructing and reconstructing these individuals' initiatives and responses in its cultural and social structural terms. Thus as virtual structures that not only define and regulate interactions but also reflect how they actually transpire, individuals and collectivities are each subject to the constraining and potentially transforming influence of the other.

As elaborated thus, this concept of the dual structuration of social life implies a relationship between forces that, while different from one another, are internally homogeneous. The postmodernist vision alerts us to the danger of this. The community is clearly a diverse entity comprised of multiple enterprises, groups and sites of interaction. Each of these may constitute a discursive community that varies not only in its substance but also in its structure. As the postmodernist suggests, how these operate on one another is very much a matter of power. Now we may supplement this claim with a recognition that while discourses may be isolated from and opposed to one another in a society, they are subject to the forms of integration which may be

practically imposed by individuals who deploy them in a subjectively determined way. This adds a strongly psychological, and heretofore largely ignored, component to the analysis of culture.

In complementary fashion, psychological research and everyday experience suggests that while individual subjects may reason in a singularly structured fashion, there are conditions that may evoke qualitatively different kinds of reasoning from the same individual. An example is clinical psychological insight into how childhood experience is structured differently than adult experience. While adults typically operate at their mature level of cognition, specific experience, especially emotionally loaded experience, may cue more child-like or earlier ways of thinking. The net result is a complex view of the subject as a source of structuration. In the present context, this psychological view of the dynamics of subjective structuration may be supplemented by recognizing that, in the course of their daily life, subjects participate in and are thus regulated by a number of potentially quite different discourse communities. This may also cue different forms of subjective engagement in a way that has largely been ignored by clinical or especially cognitive developmental psychologists.

The theoretical claim that the structures that regulate social life may differ from one another has a number of important implications the conception of everyday social exchange. To begin, it suggests that the meaning and direction of a particular action at a given moment will be intrinsically uncertain. Insofar as the action is dually structured, the quality of its connection to other action and its own intrinsic definition is neither a simple product of the individual nor of the social context. In any particular instance, more than one source of structuration is attempting to operate on the concrete ground of what is occurring and coordinate it in its specific terms. The result is a *structured uncertainty*, an uncertainty bounded by the determinations of both the reasoning subject and the regulating social context. At any given moment of a particular social

interaction, the flow of events may be more or less determined by one or the other source of regulation.

The dual structuration of action results not only in an inherent uncertainty, but also a tension. Sharing the same ground of operation, the two different structuring forces of subjective reasoning and social determination contravene one another and compete for substantive realization. Each struggles with the other in order to operate accordingly to its own logic. The integrity of either structure is thus placed at risk by the other. In this vein, the individual may move to undermine the power of social regulation by regarding it as nonsensical, inhumane or simply irrelevant. In complementary fashion, the collective may move to delegitimize the individual's understanding by defining it as silly, stupid or degenerate. Whereas both moves are extreme, they are suggestive of the range of what regularly occurs. They also indicate something of the occasionally palpable, but always potential, tension of social interaction and discourse.

Suggesting that social action is characterized by an uncertainty and tension that reflects the qualitative difference between the two structuring forces that define and regulate it, structural pragmatics leads social psychological inquiry to focus on the dynamic of the relationship between structures. Through their operation on the same social actions, the individual and the collective are continually restructuring each other's attempt to define and coordinate specific exchanges. As a result, each source of structuration is regularly confronted with the concrete effects of a systematic effort to coordinate interaction in a structurally different manner from its own. Initially, the result is potentially destabilizing. As the individual's personal structuration of action regularly fails to produce the anticipated results, self-doubt ensues. Similarly as collective or intersubjective efforts to coordinate the interaction between individuals fail, they are questioned and delegitimized. This structural destabilization opens up the possibility of a second result, a

structural transformation of one level of coordination to meet the manifest pressure exercised by the other level. This reciprocal pressure to restructure constitutes the developmental dynamic of social life, one that may produce qualitatively different forms of structuration (personal and collective) at different periods in the history of individuals and the groups to which they belong.

Implications for the conduct of political psychology.

Having sketched an epistemology that can orient political psychology, I will conclude by briefly consider its theoretical, methodological and normative implications.

Theory. The foregoing structural pragmatic epistemology provides clear direction for theory development in political psychology. To begin it suggests the need to clearly specify the various structural forms that do or can operate in the ordering of social and political life. There are clearly psychological and sociological dimensions to this task. On the psychological side there is a need to explicate the forms that subjectively constructed understandings and evaluations may take. This requires delineating the forms of coherence that underlie the manifest diversity of a given individual's cognitive and emotional activity.¹⁵ At the same time, this general search for coherence must be tempered by a sensitivity to possible alternative sources of structuration that may operate in the case of a particular individual. This requires a consideration of (1) how the individual subject retains the residues of a personal history that allows her to draw on more than one form of subjectively directed engagement and (2) how the individual's structuration of meaning can be affected by the socially structured conditions of interaction.¹⁶ This suggests a need to theorize not only about the modes of engagement and subjectively constructed structures of meaning, but also to make clear how and when either personal history or social forces may elicit different modes of subjectively oriented engagement.

On the sociological side of this investigation of structure, there is a need to explicate the structural forms that collectively or intersubjectively structured cultures and social (or political) organizations may take. This requires discovering the type of coherence that is characteristic of a community's discourses or its patterns of social interaction.¹⁷ Again this search for a dominant or typical structuration of meaning and action must be complemented by a consideration of both (1) how that community is internally differentiated and thus may consist of a number of structurally different and competing sources of social structuration, and (2) how the social structuring of meaning can be affected by the subjective reconstruction of that meaning by the individuals involved. Thus theory must address how and when either alternative discourses within a society or the subjective contributions of its individual members may lead to different modes of social regulation than are typical of dominant social and political institutions.

As suggested above, the theoretical explication of sociopolitical or psychological structures must address the relationship between the two. This would include an explanation of how these two levels of structuration delimit each other's operation and thus the quality of the structure each constructs. These rather general concerns would probably have to be elaborated through more specific consideration of how different forms of either social or psychological structuration impinge on one another. It is not clear that all forms would necessarily have the same deconstructive or reconstructive effect. This consideration of the relationship between subjective and intersubjective structures in turn requires a reconsideration of the quality of the structures themselves. Each source of structuration would have to be reconceived in light of its penetration by the other. For example, a social organization would have to be conceived as internally differentiated structure that can accommodate existing differences in the capacities of its individual members to respond to that organization and interact with one another. Similarly, an

individual's thought would have to be conceived as internally differentiated structure that can accommodate existing differences in the types of social organizations and cultural discourses in which that individual participates.

A final and central concern is the understanding of social change, when it will occur and when it will not. Given the focus on the relationship between individual and sociopolitical structurations of meaning, a political psychological theory must be able to specify how one source of structuration may lead to a transformation in the structure of the other. This would include an account of (1) how social and political institutions might be structured so as to foster a qualitative transformation in how otherwise resistant individuals view and interact with one another, and (2) how developing individuals may interact with one another in a way which fosters qualitative change in the structure of otherwise constraining institutions. In turn, this raises questions regarding the direction of change and the possible need to distinguish between regressive and progressive transformations. Such a theory must also clarify how change is obstructed, that is how and under what conditions structuration of one kind is likely to undermine structural transformations at the other level. For example, this might include an explication of how individuals may be resisting and perhaps undermining the current cultural and social structural transformations characteristic of the transition to a postmodern society and a complementary account of how some current social and political institutions may inhibit individuals' socio-cognitive development. Again whereas all these issues may be addressed in a quite general way, it is clear that the resulting theory will have to be elaborated by considering how these interactive dynamics may be worked out differently in the case of different forms of sociopolitical or psychological structuration. What produces resistance or transformation under one set of structured conditions may not do so under conditions that are constituted differently.

Method. Clearly the substance of the particular political psychological theory developed will dictate the specific hypotheses to be explored in empirical research. Given the foregoing suggestions regarding the general form that such a theory will take, this will include a typology of the forms of that sociopolitical and subjective structuration may take. In addition, there will be hypotheses advanced regarding the nature and conditions of the mutual constraint and possible impetus for transformation that particular sociopolitical and subjective forms of structuration place one another.

The empirical methods employed to investigate these questions will have to be crafted in light of the epistemological claims guiding the research. The claim that meaning is structured suggests the corollary caveat that the substance and meaning of statements or action can only be determined with reference to the dually structured context in which it occurs. The latter suggests that any empirical investigation of statements and action cannot assume in advance that the nature of these objects of inquiry is known. To the contrary, methods must be crafted which allow for an interpretation of the quality and meaning of those statements. This requires the data collection techniques that allow for an observation of the apparent way in which a number of statements and actions are interrelated in the unfolding of a given person's expression or purposive action or a given community's discourse or social interaction. Once collected, a bootstrapping effort is required in which successive attempts are made (1) to infer the structure underlying the observed relationships, (2) then to check the fit between the inferred structure and existing or additional observations of how actions do lead to one another and (3) to adjust the initial understanding of the structure accordingly. A good example of such an empirical method is provided by the so-called "clinical experiments" conducted by cognitive developmental psychologists and their

efforts to offer an interpretative account of the underlying structure of the reasoning they have observed (e.g., Inhelder and Piaget, 1956; Kohlberg, 1981; Rosenberg 2002).

One further methodological caveat must also be considered in conjunction with this emphasis on interpretation. In more conventional interpretative research such as the psychological research of cognitive developmentalists or psychoanalysts or the sociological research of structural Marxists and poststructuralists, the researcher's act of interpretation is regarded as a typically personal, reflective enterprise. Viewed from a structural pragmatic perspective, this is clearly an important dimension of interpretative activity. However, it is not its sole component. Interpretation entails a dialogical component. Beyond communication among researchers themselves, this may also require a collaborative discourse between researchers and the people they are studying. In any case, methodological attention to the place of this dialogical component in political psychological inquiry and how this dialogue should be structured is necessary.

This emphasis on interpretation does not preclude more standard survey and experimental research. Rather it suggests that such research cannot be used at the outset. The problem is that evidence of correlation discovered in a survey or causal relation discovered in an experiment does not allow for an interpretation of the quality of the correlative or causal relationship observed. Rather the meaning or quality of the relationship is assumed to be transparent and each discovered relationship is considered on its own terms. The epistemology guiding the proposed political psychological research suggests this approach and its underlying assumption are incorrect. Whether the correlation or causal relationship is intra-personal or interpersonal, a structural pragmatic epistemology suggests that the quality of that relationship is structurally determined. It is necessarily dictated both by the structuring force of the cultural context and the subjective contributions of the individuals involved. Insofar as either of these

structuring forces is ignored, it is likely that the “discovered” relationship will be misunderstood, that is its own nature and connection to other related phenomena will not be correctly apprehended. As a result, any attempt to predict the conditions under which the observed relationship will hold (or change) is likely to fail. That said, once the dually structured conditions of an observed situation or set of situations is understood, particular relationships may be explored using traditional survey and experimental methods. Of course, the dialogical dimension of interpretation discussed above suggests that the people studied participate in the determination of the meaning of the data collected and analyzed in this way.

Normative considerations. A structural pragmatic epistemology also suggests the ends and means of normative or ethical inquiry. In both instances, considerations are conditioned by the background recognition that values and judgments are socio-historically and subjectively relative constructions. In the case of the determination of the ends of normative inquiry, this structural pragmatic understanding shifts analysis from a focus on values and judgments themselves to the processes whereby they are constructed. This in turn leads to several levels of ethical consideration. On one level, there may be a consideration of the compatibility of the values advocated and the quality of the structuring forces that are operative. Thus if individuals are thinking in concretely, experientially guided terms and social regulation consists of specific rituals of action, the value of freedom makes little cultural or subjective sense. Indeed to the degree that these values can be practically introduced, the general effect would be a negative one of personal and cultural disintegration. At another level, there may be an assessment of the relative input of individuals and communities into the value determination process. Clearly the comprehensibility and practicality of values or evaluative practices is relative to the structures of meaning and action into which they are incorporated. Insofar as the construction of value tends to

be dominated either by individuals or by their community, the meanings and needs of the weaker structuring force may be (within certain limits that need to be understood) ignored. This may prove destructive for either the individual selves or for the community thus subordinated. In this manner, the ethical worth of particular value claims or evaluative practices may be judged from an expressly social psychological point of view.

Structural pragmatics also suggests how ethical inquiry should be conducted. In a manner that parallels empirical research, ethical inquiry requires the interpretative analysis of the quality or meaning of the values and evaluative practices observed or considered. This in turn implies that ethical inquiry must be conducted in a manner that is sensitive to the socio-cultural and psychological relativity of the normative standards to be inferred. In addition structural pragmatics suggests that normative inquiry cannot be the isolated enterprise of the philosopher or political theorist. While such subjective aspects of the inquiry are important, the inquiry must also be discursive. In the latter regard, it must also engage those whose values are being judged and it must do so in full recognition of the potential for irresolvable disagreement that may follow.

Conclusion. As I stated at the outset, political psychology is at a crossroads. New theoretical direction is being demanded from within and a greater epistemological sophistication and ethical relevance is being demand from without. In this context, I have suggested the need for a reconstructed, truly integrative political psychology that can meet these various demands. I have also outlined the epistemological foundations and the basic theoretical framework that such a political psychology requires. Of course the reader may well disagree with the particular solution I have offered. That said I firmly believe that the demands confronting political psychology are real and pivotal. They constitute a challenge and an opportunity, not only for political psychology, but also for social science more generally.

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¹ For the social structural bases of postmodernist thought, see Harvey, 1990; Jameson, 1991.

² For classic examples of this approach in political science, see Downs, 1957; Riker and Ordeshook, 1973; Olson, 1965. For a more contemporary statement, see Riker, 1995.

³ For an early but quite different example of a psychologically reductionist view of politics, see Lasswell's *Psychopathology and Politics* (1930).

⁴ This focus on socialization was evident both in the study of adults (e.g., the seminal work of Campbell, et al., 1960; followed by Nie, Verba & Petrocik, 1976) and in the study of children (Greenstein, 1965; Easton and Dennis, 1969; Hess and Torney, 1967).

⁵ For diagnoses of this crisis, see Riesman (1950), Lasch (1984), Lyotard (1984); Giddens (1990).

⁶ In some more psychological approaches, e.g. that of neoclassical economics, there is a clear recognition that the aggregation of individual initiatives may produce unintended consequences. This may create an incompatibility between individual's desires and the value of the collective outcomes that the pursuit of those desires produces. In my view, there are two limits to this conception of the disjuncture between individuals and the collectivity. First, the disjuncture is defined to be a substantive one, a matter of differing evaluations of specific outcomes. The kind of disjuncture I am discussing is much more general, revolving around the construction of meaning and the organization of action. Second, and related to the first, the substantive disjuncture between individual desires and collective outcomes posited by the economist is likely to be self-correcting. Individuals understand the unsatisfactory nature of the collective outcome and respond with choices to better realize their interests. The kind of disjuncture I am referring to implies a general uncoupling of individual and collective phenomena such that constructions at one level are somewhat opaque to constructions at the other level. Thus I assume individuals typically will not be able to properly perceive, understand or respond to the collective or institutional conditions of their action.

⁷ A few social or political psychologists have responded (e.g., Gergen, 1973; Sampson, 1993; Suedfeld, 2001).

⁸ Of course a great deal of political psychological research operates in the service of valued ends, but the choice of ends is assumed to be quite separate from the theories and methods guiding the research.

⁹ For examples see the classic study of political culture by Almond and Verba (1965) or the more recent work on post-industrial society by Inglehart (1990).

¹⁰ Compare examples of modernist (e.g., Almond and Verba, 1963; Inglehart, 1990) and poststructuralist (e.g., Foucault's histories of the asylum or punishment, 1965; 1979) characterization of differences among cultures. For an interesting attempt to incorporate some of the constructivist, pragmatic and culturally relativist critiques of modernism while still retaining core modernist aspirations see Habermas (1984). His attempt to characterize forms of discourse is particularly relevant here.

¹¹ Of course, if it is assumed that specific individuals or categories of individuals differ fundamentally, basic values will be construed differently. Arguably, this is integral to the ethics of modern racism.

¹² For a more on structural pragmatics, see the discussion in Chapter Two of *The Not So Common Sense* (Rosenberg, 2002).

¹³ An example would be Chomsky's analysis of the relationship between the structure of language and the structure of mind (Chomsky, 19).

¹⁴ This reference to social life as dually structured should not be confused with the analysis of the agency-structure relationship offered by Anthony Giddens (1979; 1984). While Giddens is critical of the sociological reduction of agents to “structural dopes,” he does little more than suggest that agents do have some kind of creative input into social life. Through the “reflexive monitoring of action” the agent largely reproduce the routines of social life, occasionally providing some novel variation. In his theory, however, there is little room to explicate the nature of this creative input or the manner of its genesis. Structure (and hence the organization of action) remains a collective phenomenon while agents are amorphous entities that typically reproduce social structure. Relative to Giddens’ conception, the approach I advocate would suggest the need to begin by elaborating a more structural concept of agency, one that is distinguished from the structure of social regulation.

¹⁵ For examples of such an attempt, see Piaget’s work on stages of cognitive development (e.g. Inhelder and Piaget, 1956), Kegan’s work on stages of emotional development (Kegan, 1982, 1994) and Rosenberg’s work on types of social and political thinking (e.g., Rosenberg 1988, Chapter 4; 2001 Chapters 3-7).

¹⁶ For early theory about the social structuration of types of cognition, see the Russian research on development by Vygotsky, (1962,1978) and Luria, (1971). For an extension of this, see Wertsch, 1991).

¹⁷ For a good example of this, see Habermas analysis of forms of discourse (Habermas, 1987).