

THE AUTHORITARIAN COSMOS:
COMPLEXITY, ELECTIVE AFFINITIES AND THE
“THERMODYNAMICS” OF THE SELF

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A dissertation is nothing short of Homeric Odyssey into fairly uncharted intellectual territory; a journey of self-exploration that takes one to the outer limits of the self ... and – at times – to the brink of insanity. But writing a dissertation reflects more than a simple act of individual vanity; it documents the long and often productive exchanges between great hearts and minds – be they in the guise of a real-life discussion at the local corner pub, the uplifting AHA-effects in a graduate seminar or the intimate dialogue with a dusty treatise on human nature. In short, a dissertation (and this dissertation in particular) constitutes nothing but a fleeting shooting star on the evermore elusive canvas of “knowledge”....

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Chapter 1: Introduction

"[T]here is nothing to explain unless there is first some reasonably good description of what it is one is trying to explain." Milton Rokeach (1973)

The Challenge of Conceptual Pluralism

The thought of authoritarianism conjures up images of Orwellian dystopias where all-powerful dictators and institutions coax blind automatons into lives of pseudo-happiness. While the characterization of “authoritarians” as zombie-like worshippers of obedience, insecure adherents to black-and-white worldviews and anxious practitioners of intolerance has gained much currency in the popular culture, the academic community remains fairly divided over the ontology, anatomy and physiology of so-called *authoritarian phenomena*¹. After more than seven decades of intense research in the field, the rather curious situation remains in which the concept is being measured in an ever more “reliable” fashion while – at the same time – the debate continues to “rage” over *what it actually is* that is being measured (Altemeyer 1981; Duckitt 2009; Kirscht and Dillehay 1967). While some scholars have addressed the paradox by arguing that the “nature of authoritarianism ... and ... its manifestations have

¹ While the terms of “authoritarian phenomena” and “authoritarianism” are used interchangeably throughout the dissertation one caveat seems in place. Hence, the term of authoritarianism here captures the phenomenon as such and not only its political or ideological dimensions.

likely changed” (Samelson 1993), many conceptual disagreements remain (Duckitt 2009).

At the core of these interdisciplinary controversies lie issues of dimensionality, dynamics and causality. Confusion especially arises over whether authoritarianism should be treated as an antecedent, a consequence and/or a correlate (Kirscht and Dillehay 1967; Stenner 2005). Conceptualizations differ on whether to view the phenomenon as a personality dimension, a personality syndrome, a set of social attitudes or a value-belief orientation and scholars keep disagreeing over how many “dimensions” to include. The academic community also can’t agree on whether conservatism and authoritarianism are separate constructs (Stenner 2005) or similar ones. Highlighting consistencies across a wide range of concepts such as authoritarianism, compulsion, conservatism, dogmatism, militarism, nationalism, and religiosity, Eckhardt (1991) for example, has suggested that these phenomena all “look as if they were different aspects of the same thing” meaning facets of the same “value dimension” (see also Wilson 1973). Other authors have raised warning flags over value-centric undercurrents in the field by arguing that it tends to suffer from a general tendency to assign “all things evil ... at one end of the distribution; [and] all things healthy and democratic ... on the other” (Masling 1954, also see Martin 2001). Hence more recently efforts have been made to look at the “positive” manifestations of authoritarianism; this work suggests that it can impart a range of psychological benefits to the individual by reducing levels of depression and stress (Van Hiel and De Clercq 2009). Go figure.

Theories of authoritarian phenomena also cultivate modern variations of the age-old nature-nurture debate. Scholar inspired by evolutionary psychology and evolutionary biology, for example, have recently become vocal advocates of evolutionary accounts of authoritarianism. Evolution of social life, according to them, hinged upon the evolution of authoritarian characteristics. Hence, authoritarianism – through that lens – has been and potentially is biologically adaptive. With its reliance on conventions, submission to norms and authorities as well as aggression against normative deviants, it is said to have helped to increase the rates of ingroup cooperation and enhance group performance (Kessler and Cohrs 2008). Bolstering information for these evolutionary accounts also comes from work that see authoritarianism as a mix of genetic predispositions and random life experiences (McCourt, Bouchard, Lykken, Tellegen, and Keyes 1999) or as expressions of innate personality traits such as openness to experience and agreeableness (Peterson, Smirles, and Wentworth 1997; Saucier 2000). Sociologists, social psychologists and political scientists – in contrast – have advanced explanations which put non-biological dynamics center stage. To them authoritarianism constitutes an outcome of unique socialization trajectories (Altemeyer 2004), intergenerational transmission of social values (Chatard and Selimbegovic 2008), a worldview-mediated interaction between personality traits and social attitudes (Van Hiel, Cornelis, and Roets 2007), a threat-mediated ingroup or intergroup phenomena (Duckitt 1989; Kreindler 2005), a threat-mediated interaction between psychological predispositions and group-phenomena (Stellmacher and Petzel 2005; Stellmacher 2004) or a manifestation of underlying structural and ideological

conditions in a society (Adorno, Frenkel-Brunswik, Levinson, and Sanford 1950). Efforts of interdisciplinary “reconciliation” and theory integration (see for example Duckitt 2009) exist but often remain in an embryonic stage.

Given this mindboggling array of conceptual innovativeness, theoretical traditions and/or paradigmatic assumptions, one cannot but sit back in awe and contemplate if and how these pieces may actually fit together. The reductionist quest for reality compression – so prevalent during the past decades in the field – has taken us deeper and deeper into the inner workings of the authoritarian cosmos. However, despite these fascinating new theoretical and empirical breakthroughs – or maybe because of them – the time now seems ripe to “zoom out” and compose – out of the notes of history – a more harmonic concerto – a symphony of logic capable of being able to explain the complexity seemingly inherent to the phenomenon.

Toward a More Holistic Model of Authoritarian Phenomena

Inspired by the theoretical eclecticism and interdisciplinary discipleship of earlier social theorists² this dissertation therefore develops a more ecological framework for tackling authoritarian phenomena. Carrying the now so seemingly quaint “torch of the enlightenment”³, it offers a “new” conceptual vantage point from which it may be possible to crystallize key theoretical dimensions into more stable signifier-signified relations. Meeting complexity *with* complexity and trying to avoid falling victim to what

² This involves individuals like K. Marx, G.H. Mead, John Dewey and/or E. Fromm.

³ This is a critical reference to John Duckitt’s (2009) questionable comments on characterizing the Frankfurt School’s attempts to politically empower and enlighten the “masses” as ideologically attractive and/or naïve.

Max Horkheimer (1931) called “limited rationality” (German: Verengung der Rationalität)⁴, this dissertation constitutes a conceptual archeology⁵ in which four major conceptual themes are highlighted (individual factors, structural factors, ideational factors and core values and beliefs) and then reconstituted into the structural pillars of a new more holistic model of the authoritarian phenomenon. The conceptual integration relies on insights from a multispectral conceptual cast – lenses as diverse as Weber’s elective affinities, identity theory, social identity theory, and Symbolic Interactionist thought to the study of values and beliefs. Before the model was able to offer “new” insights, however, it had to chart a coherent path through the Saussurian mazes of the literature.

It became very clear early on in the project that building a more holistic model would require some form of intellectual dialogue across the academic disciplines (and time) – which proved rather challenging. While a number of excellent reviews of the authoritarian concept have already been published (see for example Christie 1954a; Duckitt 2009; Kirscht and Dillehay 1967; Le Rider 2007; Martin 2001) – a fact that should have simplified the task – many of them seem to spend a disproportionate time covering “contemporary” theoretical developments and/or narrate conceptual trajectories in terms of “progress”. Given the vast number of the existing empirical studies this approach seemed quite sensible – at first. Embracing this academic pragmatism can, however, miss important conceptual continuities and thus lead to

⁴ Limited rationality, for Horkheimer, constituted the logical outcome of academic “hyperspecialization”: a rationality steeped in a growing disconnect between metaphysics (the science of meaning) and empiricism (the science of “reality”).

⁵ The term “*conceptual archeology*” is being here in a more literary sense to refer to a theoretical meta-analysis (for other usages see, for example, Foucault in the “The Order of Things” (1970)).

situations where theory building silences the wisdom of the past. While focusing on change can show how constructs and their operational definitions have evolved over time, this *modus operadi* can – under the paradigmatic hegemony of particular historical periods and intellectual traditions – mask important dynamics; dynamics that themselves may be crucial for the understanding of the phenomenon at hand. The sociology of knowledge reminds us that the frequent ebbs and flows of particular explanatory factors do not reach a conceptual crescendo in the present: human understanding – as Peter Berger (1967) has so convincingly shown – involves a more or less open-ended process of “nomization” in which a *particular* ordering of human experience (the “nomos”) is both read into *and* out of “reality”. This process – which is contingent upon the socio-historical and socio-cultural vagaries of the particular time – affects societies the same way as it does academia. Each theoretical lens or paradigmatic tradition therefore is steeped within its own set of explicit or implicit assumptions – epistemological substructures that not only carve out unique windows to the “truth” but also help shape the very nature of evaluative and interpretive standards. Awareness of this simple phenomenological insight does not paralyze but should remind the scholar that theories are nothing but temporal meaning structures in the much more transient epistemological puzzle of life.

Chapters 2 through chapters 4 of the dissertation illustrate how a “realist substratum” seems to permeate the different interpretative casts and conceptual choreographies in the literature. The interdisciplinary journey across three major

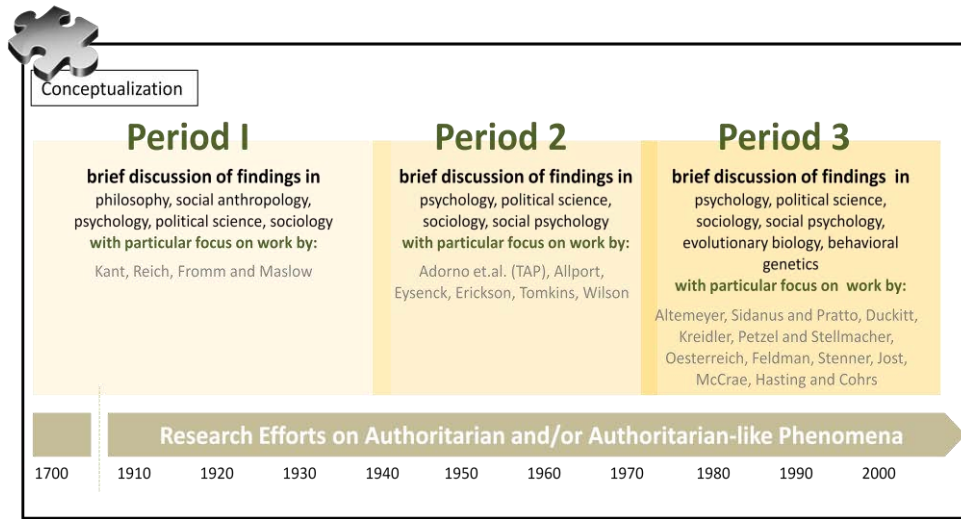


Figure 1: A Timeline of the Conceptual Archeology

research epochs⁶ (one epoch per chapter) tries to highlight – among other things – how despite profound changes in theoretical frameworks, empirical approaches and analytical vocabularies the major components that make up the “authoritarian phenomenon” have changed comparatively little over time. To develop and substantiate the logic of a new, more ecological, model, each chapter thus not only provides a short overview over the key contributions but also renders – where appropriate – historical continuities among individual factors (e.g. personality traits, values and beliefs), structural factors (e.g. socialization dynamics) and ideational factors (e.g. ideologies, worldviews) more visible. Pursuing a conceptual synthesis and providing the conceptual Esperanto⁷ necessary to sidestep the epistemological differences in the literature, each chapter ends with a theoretical “snapshot” in which findings are reframed within the

⁶ The discussion loosely follows Duckitt’s (2009) treatment of the literature.

⁷ The term “conceptual Esperanto” is used to draw attention to the theoretical usefulness of the value-belief concept as a conceptual bridge between fairly diverse phenomena.

conceptual horizon of the new model in order to show how the different factors interlock to create what has been appropriately called the “authoritarian reaction”⁸ (a phenomenon that refers to increased levels of conformity and aggression under situations of “normative threat”).

Chapter 2: The conceptual archeology begins with chapter 2. Painting with very broad strokes it chronicles the historical insights from the late 1700s to the mid 1940s and discusses how these theoretical considerations – to varying degrees – have impacted the modern concept of authoritarianism. Departing from the philosophical work on “voluntary submission” and “master-slave” dialectic/mentality, the chapter sets out to draw attention to the intellectual indebtedness of the field to German philosophy (especially to the work of Kant, Hegel and Nietzsche). While also mentioning important work from both sides of the Atlantic on political attitudes, ideologies, psychological mechanisms, cultural and social roots to personality characteristics or structure-agency-ideology links, this chapter mainly delineates the theoretical contributions of the “true” pioneers: William Reich, Erich Fromm and Abraham Maslow. These theorists – though often differing on the specifics – tend to view authoritarianism as a psychological manifestation of particular structural and ideological factors. Often advancing relational accounts, they show how “authoritarians”⁹ are both products and agents of a complex system – a system that can spark an “authoritarian reaction”. Drawing on psychodynamic and Neo-Marxist explanations, Fromm and Reich – in

⁸ For this, please, for example, the work Oesterreich (2005) and Stenner (2005).

⁹ The quotation marks are being used here to avoid reifying or psychologizing the highly complex nature of authoritarian phenomena.

particular – demonstrate how certain structural phenomena (e.g. the nature of family socialization or class relations) act in concert with supportive ideational systems (e.g. bourgeois ideologies that stress values such as respect, duty, obedience or cleanliness) to create individual-level factors. While mainly advancing structuralist and ideational (top-down) arguments, explanations that were also sensitive to different structural conditions (e.g. working-class versus upper-class environments), these theorists were not completely unaware of individual (bottom-up) phenomena. They, for example, discussed how affinities between individual factors (e.g. experiential needs for security, uncertainty and anxiety reduction), ideational factors (e.g. attractiveness of totalitarian or conservative ideologies) and structural arrangements (e.g. push toward affiliation with totalitarian organizations) coalesce in intra-psychic defense mechanisms. Fromm and Reich also give credence to the importance of biosocial needs, beliefs and drives in their theoretical treatises, while others such as Maslow (and to some degree Fromm) hinted at the importance of Hobbesian personal worldviews (and thus the role of individual value-belief systems) in shaping motivational realities. In short, chapter 2 tries to illustrate that – although individual factors received much attention during this period – a protean version of a truly interactionist model of authoritarianism – one that incorporates complex dynamics among individual, structural and ideational factors – already existed.

Chapter 3: Following chronologically, the third chapter picks up where the second one had left and discusses the theoretical evolution¹⁰ of the concept from the mid 1940s into the early 1970s. It shows how – with the publication of *The Authoritarian Personality* (TAP) (Adorno et al. 1950) – the work in the “field” slowly began to drift away from its originally more holistic treatments toward in-depth explorations of single factors¹¹. While the TAP often followed the early pioneers in exploring individual-ideational links (e.g. attractiveness of particular ideologies) and individual-structural connections (e.g. nature of religious group membership, family socialization dynamics), the disproportionate attention it gave to individual factors (e.g. personality structures of “authoritarians” and “non-authoritarians”, self-dynamics, cognitive functioning, extrapunitive, values and beliefs, conventionality) left a strong mark on the field as a whole. Buoyed by the spirit of the time, much of the research during this period also took a positivist and post-positivist turn toward trying to find quantitative answers to the problem. Although alternative formulations did emerge and often interjected – with varying degrees of success – interesting new ideas into mainstream research, many of them remained staunchly situated within the classic empirical research paradigm¹². Authors, for example, began to tie authoritarian-like phenomena to social attitude orientations (e.g. Eyeseneck’s Toughmindedness-Tendermindedness distinction), cognitive-based processes related to particular belief-

¹⁰ Evolution – unlike its common use in the social sciences – is being used here in its original Darwinian formulation and refers to *interactional* dynamics that leads to undirected change (e.g. changes in a species’ gene pool in response to changes in environmental conditions or variations in structure-agency relations as a result of historical factors).

¹¹ Notable exceptions exist: see Gordon Allport’s work for example.

¹² The research paradigm often involved date-driven, post-hoc types of research approaches.

disbelief systems (e.g. Rockeach's Dogmatism), ideology-based emotional scripts (e.g. Tomkin's Affect Theory) and/or structural and ideational reinforcement mechanisms that generate "polarized identities" (e.g. Erickson's Totalitarian Personality). In doing so, many of these alternative conceptualizations – like those of the founding fathers – stressed the importance of affective and cognitive aspects of the individual as well as the role of collective value and beliefs (e.g. types and role of values, beliefs, attitudes, content of worldviews and ideology). Sociological contributions during this time also helped to broaden the understanding of authoritarian-like phenomena by providing in-depth structural analyses of the role of reference groups, contextual triggers, ingroup-outgroup dynamics or the nature of social categorization processes. While many of these insights failed to impinge on the conceptual pulse of the time they helped to till the ground for more sophisticated contemporary models. In short, while the second research period seemed overshadowed by explorations into individual factors, the phase also provide insights resonant with a more interactionist model involving structural factors, ideational factors as well as core values and beliefs.

Chapter 4: While the 1970s generally saw a decline in research activity, a combination of new conceptual developments, conservative shifts in Western societies in the 1980s and radical political upheavals in Eastern Europe in the 1990s sparked a renewed interest among academics in this experiential curiosity. So continuing on with the conceptual dig, Chapter 4 captures the discursive landscapes of the third period. It sets out by summarizing the two single-most influential attempts to rejuvenate the field. Bob Altemeyer's efforts to apply social learning theory and develop a psychometrically-

sound model of authoritarianism – which he coined right-wing authoritarianism (RWA) – provided the original impetus. Altemeyer – like the TAP authors – argued that authoritarianism represents a personality syndrome, but unlike the TAP formulation he proposed three dimensions (submission, aggression and conventionality) that can be measured via a set of cohering social attitudes. A few years later Felicia Pratto and Jim Sidano borrowing strongly from social identity theory to propose social dominance theory (SDO) which shifted the conceptual focus more toward intergroup relations. Central to the theory are “preferences” or “general attitude orientations” (e.g. for/toward hierarchical or egalitarian group relations) that help pre-pattern intergroup dynamics. As the chapter will demonstrate, the scholarly community quickly realized that both conceptions are mutually complementary – constitutive of the two major facets of the authoritarian reaction: submission (as measured by RWA) and aggression (as captured by SDO). Couched in a lively intellectual exchange, the field began not only to generate a large body of empirical studies, but also began to produce a number of conceptual alternatives.

John Duckitt’s work led the way in these efforts. He attempted to apply social identity theory and proposed a new group cohesion model of authoritarianism. Focusing on issues of group salience and putting micro-structural factors center-stage he argued that group salience increases social cohesion via an increase of commitment levels. While distally acknowledging individual factors, he maintains that the key to a truer understanding of the authoritarian phenomena resides in intragroup processes that maintain normative order. He, however, later revised the original model by wedding

individual factors to the structural pillars of his framework. Seeing authoritarianism as an outcome of two “motivational goals” (as conceptualized by RWA and SDO) that become contextually-primed and sustained/mediated via particular “worldviews”, he rang in a new round of theory integration. Motivational goals also form the core of so-called cognitive-motivational models proposed by Jost and his colleagues. These authors tried to blend theories of personality (e.g. authoritarianism, dogmatism-intolerance of ambiguity), epistemic and existential needs (e.g. the need for cognitive closure, regulatory focus, terror management) with theories of ideological rationalization (social dominance, system justification).

In a different line of research scholars like Karen Stenner, Stanley Feldmann or William Eckhardt began to advance strong theoretical arguments for treating authoritarianism as a “value orientation” that gets primed situationally (especially via normative threats). This view is consistent with a range of empirical work that demonstrates that certain core values and beliefs tend to act as bridges between particular personality dimensions and ideological factors. While the discussion as to whether authoritarianism includes a personality dimension has received further support from intra- and intergenerational studies on value transmission, studies in evolutionary psychology that stress the adaptive nature of authoritarian-like phenomena, correlative studies that tie authoritarianism to the five-factor model of personality as well as recent large-scale twin studies, the precise role that individual factors play remains fairly contested. Kreidler and her Dual-Group Process Model, for example, takes a much more structuralist approach by arguing that authoritarianism results from two intertwined

processes: “category differentiation” (as measured by SDO) and “normative differentiation” (as measured by RWA). She contends that intragroup processes bestow a social identity to the individual, which is then maintained through structural and ideational processes (e.g. collective rationalizations such as hierarchical intergroup beliefs and adherence to the normative order of the ingroup). Overly structuralist explanations, however, remain contested on the grounds that these conceptual frameworks neither provide satisfactory explanations for salience of social identities nor the attractiveness of particular (in contrast to “any”) structural arrangements and/or ideational orientations¹³. Hence, individual factors have remained a major candidate for the development of more inclusive explanatory models.

Taken together then, the chapter then chronicles how this last period not only continued along older conceptual tracks but also how it began to carve out new interdisciplinary inroads. Embedded into a major paradigm shift toward social learning or social identity-based explanations, the period especially excelled in (1) formulating new integrative models and developing more reliable measures, (2) drawing more attention to structural explanations (e.g. ingroup and/intergroup dynamics such as membership salience, norms for social cohesion, contextual effects that mediate expressions of the authoritarian reaction or role of normative threats), (3) renewing the interest in the functional role of motivational goals, values, value-orientations, core beliefs and/or worldviews, (4) establishing links to our evolutionary past and an

¹³ This view is especially expounded by three German theorists: D. Oesterreich, T. Petzel and J. Stellmacher.

individual's genetic present and (5) acknowledging that authoritarian phenomena operate at different levels of abstraction (e.g. from groups to nation-states).

The “New” Model: Tackling Complexity

Chapter 5 develops the theoretical groundwork for a “new”, more holistic model of authoritarian phenomena (see Figure 1). Building upon the insights from the three historic periods, the model tackles the complex interactions among the now so familiar three factors: *individual factors* (e.g. genetics, personality traits and cognitive functioning, threat perceptions), *ideational factors* (e.g. ideologies, worldviews, threat) and *structural factors* (e.g. socialization, group dynamics), and situates the factors into a more dynamic yet fairly stable framework of value-belief affinities. The “new framework” recognizes that transcending the accentuating tendencies of each historical period and addressing the complexity of the phenomenon necessitates trading detail for scope, causality for interconnectedness as well as interrelatedness. This conceptual trade-off, as the chapter will show, poses a number of challenges – challenges which necessitates the recruitment of a more eclectic cast of theoretical players. Being able to pay tribute to the intricacies of this complex system, the model recruits Weber's concept of elective affinities and transformed it into more than a sensitizing device¹⁴: a theoretical rationale that – at least in its misty silhouettes – can provide a potential

¹⁴ In a similar fashion, Jost (2009) recently employed Weber's concept of elective affinities to link basic personality, cognitive, motivational and situational factors as well as physiological processes to ideological differences. Echoing insights from other scholars (e.g. Rokeach, Tomkins), he argues that ideology is a meaningful concept – a concept that “may be rooted in fundamental psychological antinomies” by which he means “preferences for stability versus change, order versus complexity, familiarity versus novelty, conformity versus creativity, and loyalty versus rebellion”. While the framework presented here resonates with many of his major tenets, it not only tries to broaden its structural components but also aims to offers a somewhat different “mechanism” for understanding affinity mechanisms.

mechanism behind these “affinities”. Couched in a conceptual Esperanto of values and beliefs, this approach tries to detail how blending insights from identity theory, social identity theory, and research on values and beliefs can offer a more useful conceptual vantage point from which to understand authoritarianism.

Departing from the assumption that the “authoritarian reaction” taps into an experiential reality that overlaps with but is conceptually distinct from similar constructs, the chapter sets out to build a theoretical case for putting core values and beliefs center-stage. Core values and beliefs – as the chapter will argue – constitute individual as well as collective meaning structures that are expressive of both affective and cognitive realities of social life. Especially in their basic¹⁵ forms values and beliefs¹⁶ constitute fossil records of social experience that encapsulate and make salient biological realities as well as unique and shared socialization trajectories. Organized into conscious or unconscious systems of semi-stable ought-is schemas (at the individual level) and/or collectively-shared value-belief systems (at the ideational level), these formalized or un-formalized systems shape and are being shaped by the subtle interactional logic of social life. In the authoritarian universe, this involves Hobbesian

¹⁵ The words “basic”, “core” or “primary” are being used fairly interchangeably throughout the dissertation.

¹⁶ *Values* and *beliefs* – like many other theoretical constructs – entail a lot of ambiguity. Put simply, values constitute affective and/or cognitive manifestations of desirable “states”. They are expressions of individual and/or collective “desires” and as such are being employed – consciously or unconsciously – in the process of valuation. Beliefs, like values, represent an individual and/or collective evaluation of reality – but unlike values – are being expressed in form of truth statements. Put another way, while beliefs encapsulate a flavor of true or false, values embody “things/states” that are preferable and/or desirable. It is very important to also set values and beliefs apart from related constructs such as *norms* (which tend to be collective means for safeguarding collective beliefs and values), *primary needs* (which – to a large extent – represent biologically-rooted motivational goals and/or desires), *attitudes* (which constitute more narrow and specific beliefs) or *interests* (which tend to be more transient object-specific preferences). For a more in-depth discussion on this topic please refer to chapter 5.

beliefs of a dangerous and threatening world (which leads individuals and/or collectives to value order, stability, and security) and/or Spencerian beliefs of a world as a competitive jungle (which leads individuals and/or collectives to value power, dominance, and superiority). The chapter also discusses how situational threat dynamics can activate certain values and/or amplify core beliefs and thus trigger normative defense mechanisms that can lead to an authoritarian reaction. Unlike existing frameworks that view threats in terms of individual threat perceptions, however, the “new” model sees threat perceptions as situational beliefs (e.g. a belief that a threat exists). While this may seem like semantics, it actually fulfills two important theoretical functions. It standardizes the conceptual building blocks of the model and thus opens the authoritarian trigger mechanism up to structural and ideational influences (e.g. the social construction of threat). And, it also helps to redirect the theoretical focus from threats against group norms – as in most current conceptions of authoritarianism – toward threats against individual and collective values that those norms help protect.

Having transformed values into the conceptual particles that make up the universe of “elective affinities”, the chapter then sets out to detail how a re-conceptualization of the self (personal and social aspects of the self¹⁷) in terms of core values and beliefs can – with the resultant structure-agency and/or micro-macro openings – help to (at least partially) explain how affinities are created and sustained *in situ*. Drawing mainly on insights from structural Symbolic Interactionism, variants of identity theory, social identity theory and neurobiology, the chapter sketches out how

¹⁷ In structural symbolic interactionism situational/social selves and/or situational identities tend to be used fairly interchangeably (see Stryker and Burke 2000).

the self's reflexive push for internal coherence – a strive for value-belief consistencies across different aspects of the self – creates compensatory motivational eddies that shape aspects of social cognition as well as social behavior. This strife for coherence¹⁸ is, as the chapter argues, however, not a biosocial constant but reflects a negotiated outcome between individual factors (e.g. low openness to experience – a personality trait that creates a form of niche-seeking behavior), structural factors (e.g. structural encapsulation processes that lock individuals into particular structural and/or ideational environments) and ideational factors (e.g. ideological systems that activate and/or collectively rationalize/legitimize particular values and beliefs). This intermezzo of forces, as the literature on authoritarianism amply attests, creates individuals that fall onto a spectrum of secure-insecure selves¹⁹ - with insecure selves being experientially more predisposed toward dynamics that can potentially lead to authoritarian reactions. While secure selves seem to be better able to tolerate value-belief incongruencies, insecure selves need to create stronger coherence patterns (and thus are found in and/or drawn into socio-cultural milieus that provide security, certainty, structure and less value-belief ambiguity). Since core values and beliefs – especially for insecure selves – embody important cognitive-emotional realities, the self's strive (and ability) to achieve coherence does not necessarily need to take on conscious forms but may be

¹⁸ The model rejects postmodern arguments of a fractured self and argues that the fragmentation of social life only puts a higher strain on compensatory mechanisms. The strive for an internally consistent self – in form of a meta narrative – remains a neurobiological reality.

¹⁹ While (especially the early) authoritarianism literature generally taps into more psychologically-oriented distinctions between ego-weak versus ego-strong individuals, for reasons of conceptual consistency, the model “misappropriates” Tajfel's (1979) idea of insecure versus secure selves in order to create a contemporary equivalent to ego-weakness and ego-strength (Note, however, that Tajfel use of insecure and secure selves differs from the one advanced here. Tajfel applied his analytical distinction primarily to the perceived security of group membership).

driven to a substantial degree by more subconscious and/or unconscious dynamics (as in habituated acts).²⁰

Values and beliefs play a crucial functional role; they experientially anchor the self and provide an important defense mechanism for the individual as well as the collective. Building on work on identity standards, salience hierarchies and self-verification processes, the chapter thus tries to explain how experientially-grounded belief-structures (especially those of insecure selves) translate into core value structures that transcend personal, social and the situational aspects of self and form a fairly coherent system. Since insecure selves often have less differentiated self-structures, threats against the social and/or situational self constitutes an automatic threat against the *entire* self. For secure selves, which entertain multiple or even conflicting value-belief systems, in contrast, threats against aspects of the collective self do not automatically undermine the entire self and thus can more easily be defused. Reframing the problem as a self-dynamic steeped in value-belief patterns, the authoritarian reaction and its link to structural and ideational factors such as group salience and collective threat become more accessible. Strict conformity to norms/authority and aggressing against those that threaten core values and beliefs, then, not only helps to inoculate the individual against disintegration but also – via structural dynamics – helps to re-legitimize collectively shared value-belief systems (ideational factors). This suggests that the authoritarian reaction only occurs when the fragile harmony between structural, ideational and individual factors – which is especially important to the

²⁰ This statement reflects both cognitive dimensions (I am doing X because of value Y) and affective aspects of values (I am doing X because it “feels” right. Hence, the “feeling” is encapsulated in value Y).

insecure self – becomes situationally upset. Certain structural and ideational arrangements, however, should – at least theoretically – also be able to overtax a secure self’s ability to adequately deal with threats to the self. Nevertheless, its “build-in” anti-authoritarian buffer mechanisms should not only help reduce receptivity to value threats but also temper tendencies toward blind adherence to norms and authority in cases of threat (and in extension, more extreme forms of aggression).

Chapter 6 then takes the theoretical framework and applies it to a set of hypothetical scenarios and sub-scenarios in order to determine under what constellations authoritarian reactions are most likely to emerge. Based on a brief summary of authoritarian amplifiers and/or authoritarian dampeners, the chapter tries to especially pinpoint possible interactional differences in the embedded insecure and the embedded secure self. In linking biological realities to structural as well as ideational contingencies, the “new model” attempts to not only move past current group-based models but also tries to (1) explain why certain types of individuals are disproportionately drawn into particular structural or ideological arrangements (as opposed to “some”), (2) show how particular group identities become more salient for certain types of individuals (and not for others), (3) demonstrate in what ways salience propensities are built into collective value-belief matrices (and the structural and ideational systems that cohere around them), (4) discuss how threat perceptions are socially constructed by dynamic yet stable structural-ideational amplifiers and/or dampeners or (5) understand how certain types of individuals acquire particular core values and beliefs (as opposed to “some”).

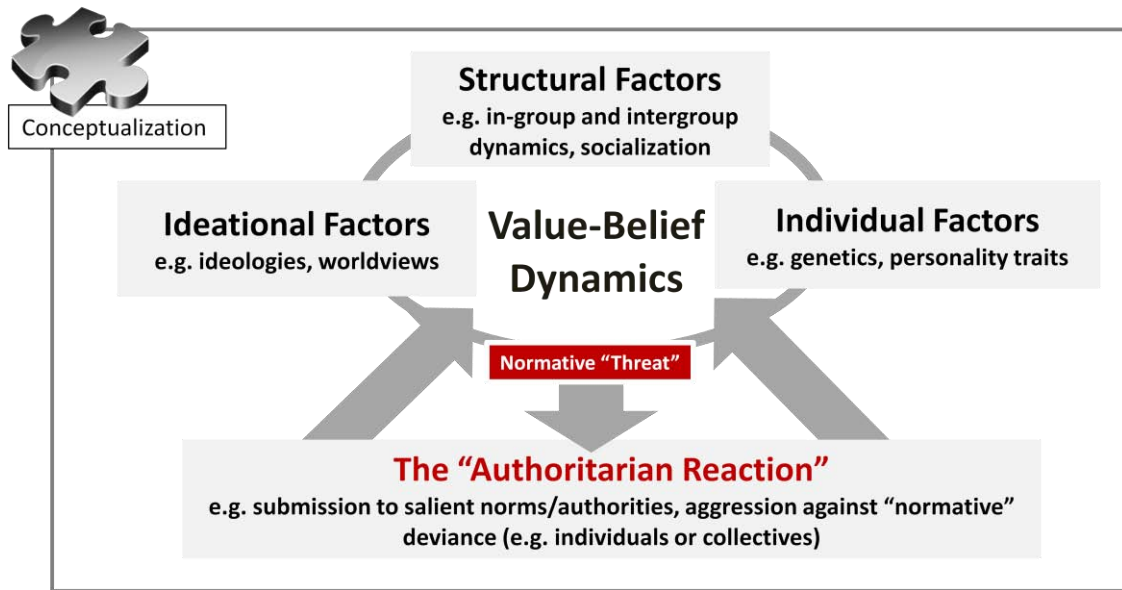


Figure 2: The “New” Holistic Model of the “Authoritarian Constellation”

Viewing authoritarian phenomena (which are characterized by higher levels of in-group conformity and/or intergroup hostility) as an emergent property of a tripartite system of value-belief affinities not only returns the debate to the theoretical complexity of the founding fathers but also provides a “new” way of seeing “elective affinities” as the outcome of socially-embedded and socially-pattered self dynamics. Since authoritarian phenomena involve individual propensities (e.g. which predispose individuals to adopt *particular* values and beliefs), structural arrangements (e.g. which choreograph the social spaces and dynamics in which commitments to *particular* sets of values and beliefs are created and maintained) as well as ideational structures (e.g. which help to legitimize, perpetuate and protect *those* very value-belief systems), it becomes intuitive that to argue that authoritarian reactions are subject to a wide range of interactive permutations. In one case individual factors may override structural and

ideational factors while in other circumstances structural synchronies may trigger the process. Likewise, in some cases conformist processes may create isolationist tendencies with more subdued aggressive manifestations while in others submission to salient norms and authority structure becomes the prerequisite for aggressive ideational scripts to be enacted.

Conclusions: Roads Less Travelled

The final chapter (chapter seven) – rather than providing the customary summary – only highlights a few conceptual insights and sketches out a number of research trajectories. In addition to pushing for more concerted research efforts on value-belief systems, elective affinities and self dynamics, the chapter also raises a number interesting questions. Should scholars, for example, distinguish between “true” forms and “pseudo” forms of authoritarianism? Do authoritarian-like reactions emerging within the logic of a secure self constitute an authoritarian reaction – or not? Are individuals and or collectives that espouse more Rosseauian value-belief systems as susceptible to authoritarian tendencies under certain conditions as those that subscribe to more Hobbesian and Spencerian views? Are certain value-belief systems associated with particular structural arrangements? Can any value-belief system (even those that are more “neutral”) lead to authoritarian reactions? Is the secure-insecure self distinction a useful theoretical distinction or does it reflect merely an ideological projection of this author? While the model postulates differential dynamics for insecure and secure selves, the good old nature-nurture nut has yet to be cracked. Moving

toward that end, the chapter calls for a stronger interdisciplinary research as well as interdisciplinary engagement. It argues that the field could not only benefit by incorporating insights from identity theory, structural symbolic interactionism, literature on values and beliefs, exchange theory, ritualization theories, sociology of new religious movements and/or the sociology of emotions but also by reaching out more strongly to the fields of developmental psychology, neurobiology and behavioral genetics (primarily to the less “radical” schools). Progressing along such an integrative path could help to further clarify why certain value-belief structures stubbornly cluster around specific individual, structural and ideational factors. While the future of authoritarianism research remains wide open, one thing seems already clear: *The founding fathers did point us into the right direction*

Chapter 2: Early Conceptual Contours

*“The authoritarian ... affirms, seeks out and enjoys the subjugation of men under higher power, whether this power is the state or a leader, natural law, the past or God.”
(Fromm 1929: 209-210)*

Conceptual developments often fall victim to a “narrow, ahistorical focus and selective memory”²¹ (Samelson 1993:23). Since theoretical ideas of earlier periods not only help to better understand the field’s historical pedigree but also offer valuable conceptual insights, this chapter tries to accomplish two major goals: (1) to sketch out the earliest contours of the authoritarianism concept and (2) to discuss how these ideas reflect integral parts/dynamics of a more complex model that will be outlined in chapter 5.

Philosophical Precursors: Kant, Hegel and Nietzsche

While the intellectual roots of the authoritarianism concept probably go back to the insights of the Ancient Greeks²², modern writers have especially been influenced by the writings of three German philosophers: Immanuel Kant, Georg W. Friedrich Hegel and Friedrich Nietzsche. Oestereich (2005), for example, points out that the idea of “voluntary submission” – which today has become one of the conceptual hallmarks in authoritarianism research – can be traced back to Kant’s seminal essay, “What is enlightenment” (1754/1784). In this work, Kant argued that the social, political and

²¹ Samelson seems to mainly refer to the literature of the early 20th century (e.g. contributions before Adorno et al. 1950)/

²² See K. Popper’s (1945) “Open Society” and his discussion on the “Spell of Plato”.

intellectual hegemony of the church and nobility forced individuals into a state of experiential dependency – a situation in which “cowardice” and “mental laziness” became the status quo. While the ruling elite entertained a strong interest in nurturing this intellectual immaturity, Kant maintained that individuals consciously or unconsciously embrace this submissive condition. As Kant put it:

“If I have a book that thinks for me, a pastor who acts as my conscience, a physician who prescribes my diet ... then I have no need to exert myself ... to think.” (1071)

Elevating the enlightenment as a crucial juncture in human history at which individuals finally were able to transcend the “self-imposed nonage” (1071), Kant – like other enlightenment thinkers – elevates human reason into the prime engine for progress. Foreshadowing Erich Fromm’s distinction between rational and arbitrary/irrational authority (Fromm 1941; 1966), he introduces the conceptual distinction between “public” and “private” use of reason. Understanding the need for social cohesion he acknowledges the necessity for social conformity (public reason) but argues that individuals ought to question taken-for-granted assumptions (private reason) in order to move society forward.

Kant’s ideas and his notion of submission were later carried into the wider German philosophical tradition by Hegel. In his monumental work the “Phenomenology of Spirit” (German: *Die Phänomenologie des Geistes*), he details – among other issues – the dynamics of the master/slave dialectic. He rooted his distinction into the notion of desires or drives (German: *Begierde*) which he saw as the foundation for self-

transcendence. Presenting his ideas in a narrative form he argues that self-conscious beings engage in a "struggle to the death" in which one enslaves the other only to find that this enslavement does not offer control over the world. Like Marx (who of course built on him), Hegel envisioned human history – in part – as the resolution of the struggle between master and slave. He argued that fearing the master the slave experiences a fear of nothingness (German: Furcht) and thus voluntarily submits to the master in the hope of finding meaning (Caird 2004).

This conceptual notion of the experiential quest for certainty and security made its way – through Nietzsche's work on master-slave mentality (see Solomon and Higgins 2000)²³ – into the German intellectual tradition of the early 20th century and profoundly affected the ideas of later theorists such as Sigmund Freud, William Reich and Erich Fromm.

²³ Nietzsche's take on the master-slave problematique differed from Hegel's substantially. As one of the main contributors to the early "value concept" in philosophy, he primarily focused on the nature of ethical systems and its effects on human behavior. He, for example, argued that master morality springs from the definition of good as something that affirms the self. Slave morality, on the other side, is reactionary because it starts from resentment. Bemoaning the inability to express the self, slave morality starts with "evil" and derives "good" from it. In doing so, slaves were able to elevate the "collective good" to a moral imperative from which nothing but subversion, pessimism and false humility flow. With this "transvaluation of values", slave-morality turns weakness, oppression and expressions of injustice into the illusion of strength (good). For Nietzsche – as for Hegel – much of this dialectical struggle between the two moralities can be traced to historical value conflicts. For Nietzsche, however, cultural values constitute random temporal fluctuations in the normative struggle between Roman values (strength and mastery) and Judeo-Christian values (weakness and submission). Nietzsche was concerned about the triumph of slave morality in the West – especially in its modern political manifestation of democracy. Attacking its obsession with the illusion of freedom and equality, Nietzsche denounced slave morality and the values that it stands for as a "collective degeneration" of humankind. He hoped – that by going "beyond good and evil" – humankind could eventually create a truly self-affirming value-system. Instead of turning the "will to power" outwards to subjugate or subordinate others, or inward for narcissistic vanity, Nietzsche wants humans to use the will to power to simply "will" and affirm life and the self (see Solomon and Higgins 2000).

Intellectual Antecedents in the Social Sciences

Work on authoritarian-like phenomena continued to resurface not only in the coffee shops of the philosophical avant-garde but also in those of the social scientific elite. Early social scientific work – on both sides of the Atlantic – encompassed a range of psychoanalytical, anthropological and social-psychological contributions as well as accounts from political science. Many of these conceptual ideas – directly or indirectly – influenced the work of later authoritarianism scholars (Christie 1954b; Jahoda 1954).

In 1927, for example, Sigmund Freud published his influential work *“The Future of an Illusion”* in which he argued that all organized religion constitutes nothing but a form of collective neurosis (Freud 1927/1989). While acknowledging religion’s capacity to tame asocial instincts of individuals and provide a sense of community around a set of shared values and beliefs, he maintained – in a quasi-Neo-Kantian fashion – that religion locks individuals into a perpetual state of dependency to the “primal father figure” (which for him – to varying degrees – relates to the idea of God). Three years later, in *“Civilization and its Discontents”* he refines his structuralist and ideational undertones by exploring the nexus between individual psychopathology and neurotic aspects of society in which the individual grows up (Freud 1930/2002).

Influenced by the intellectual contributions of psychoanalysis, neo-Marxism (in the form of critical theory) as well as anthropological research on the “the national character” (Fahrenberg and Steiner 2004; Inkeles and Levinson 1954/1969), a number of theorists started to formulate complex structure-agency syntheses. Beginning in the late 1920s social anthropology, in particular, increasingly began to see personality and

personality dimensions as an expression of the individual's immediate culture. Ruth Benedict's (1934) *Patterns of Culture* and her emphasis of the "psychological coherence" of a culture seems especially exemplary in this respect. By the late 1930s anthropological studies of "national character" had taken on an integrative view of the origins and began to stress the interrelatedness of personality, culture and society (for an excellent summary see Inkeles and Levinson 1954/1969).

Other scholars in the 1920s and 1930s tried to understand the nature of political ideology and political attitudes. Moore (1925), for example, examined whether there is "a temperamental predisposition toward conservatism or radicalism". He found – among other things - that measures of general intelligence and emotional stability are fairly similar for conservatives and "radicals". Cognitive measures such as "speed of reaction", difficulty of "breaking up habits", "readiness to make snap judgments" or a susceptibility to "majority influence", on the other hand, tended to be much greater for conservatives – insights that foreshadow later work on cognitive rigidity and openness to experience. While Moore also acknowledged social and cultural influences he speculated that radicalism may have innate biological antecedents. In a similar vein, Harold Laswell (1930) in his groundbreaking book *Psychopathology and Politics* employed clinical case studies in order to understand the psychodynamic roots of political orientation and political behavior. Unlike Laswell, who aimed to conceptually link personality typologies with political typologies, M. H. Harper's work – another classic in political psychology – is more empirical. Dating back to 1927, Harper constructed one of the first political attitude scales by capturing political orientation

within a conservative-liberal-radical continuum and thus provided an important research tool for the field (see Murphy, Murphy, and Newcomb 1937).

His work – among others – influenced Stagner’s (1936) research on fascist attitudes. Stagner’s empirical and theoretical work led him to believe that fascist attitudes are not only political views but rather constitute a core element in a more integrated system of general outlooks, opinions, beliefs and attitudes (including those toward outgroups). He argued that while individuals may verbally reject fascist labels they often strictly adhere to fascist principles and/or endorse fascist values. Some of his pioneering work – especially in form of scale items – made its way through detours into the California E-Scale²⁴ (Jahoda 1954). Other early work tried to link personality dimensions to the nature of authority relations. In a comparative study of “radicals” and “conservatives” and their relationship to “religious authority”, Howell (1928), for example, argued that “radicals” and “conservatives” not only seem to exhibit different personality dimensions but also take on different stances toward religious authority.

In conclusion, while this early work did not proceed under the unified banner of authoritarian research, it did provide fascinating glimpses into the nature of the phenomenon. It not only highlighted the multidimensionality of the underlying dynamics but also provided the intellectual impetus for a true field of authoritarianism research to emerge.

²⁴ The E-scale was developed and used by the authors of *“The Authoritarian Personality”* (Adorno et al. 1950) to measure ethnocentric tendencies in individuals.

Erich Fromm: The Father of the Authoritarianism Concept?

With the onset of fascism in Germany, leading German intellectuals became increasingly involved in trying to deconstruct the fascist appeal to the German masses. Many of the early pioneers of the authoritarianism concept, people like William Reich, Max Horkheimer or Erich Fromm – who were either directly or indirectly involved with the Institute of Social Research (Frankfurt School) in Germany – began to combine psychoanalytical, philosophical and sociological theories in order to pinpoint how social-structural and ideological factors can produce a certain type of individual which they called the “authoritarian character”²⁵ or the authoritarian personality”²⁶. It was those ideas that influenced prominent thinkers in the 1940s – theorists such as Abraham Maslow or Erich Erickson for example.

Some influential authoritarianism scholars like John Duckitt (2009) seem to downplay the insights from this period. He argued that the authors’ neo-Marxian, neo-Freudian and realist orientations often made it ideologically “attractive” for them to link personality traits with socialization dynamics and social structural factors. He also contends that the early work neither produced “systematic empirical work” nor “empirically-based measures” (300) for their constructs. While acknowledging some work by Fromm and Horkheimer, Duckitt maintains that these authors largely ignore “situational factors and focused so completely on personality-based explanations” (299) and viewed “social and ideological beliefs [as] ... direct expression of basic needs in the

²⁵ This is Fromm’s term.

²⁶ It is not really clear if it was Adorno or Horkheimer who first coined this term.

personality” (300). This characterization of the early work, however, not only does injustice to these scholars but also seems to dismiss the complexity with which these scholars tended to approach the topic. Many of these early contributions – especially those by Erich Fromm – not only define, delineate and characterize the nature of the authoritarian phenomenon but also provide the first contours of a truly interactionist framework.

William Reich and Erich Fromm owe much to Sigmund Freud’s and Karl Marx’s ideas. William Reich – who is seen by some as the actual founding father of authoritarianism research (Duckitt 2009; Samelson 1993) – advanced a Marxian-Freudian synthesis to explain the emergence of Nazism in Germany. In his book *“The Masspsychology of Fascism”* he rejects charismatic accounts and explores the roots of fascism in the character structures of the working-class and lower middle classes (Reich 1933 [1970]). He argued that the family as the “factory of bourgeois ideologies” not only helped to reproduce bourgeois morality but also repressed sexual needs. For Reich, it was the ideologized nature of the family structure and the psychodynamic processes of sexual repression that lead to the creation of fearful, insecure and obedient individuals that willingly submit to an authoritarian state. Reich, however, did not coin the term “authoritarian character” (German: “autoritärer Character”) – which Fromm introduced; he talked about “authoritarian enslavement” (German: “autoritäre Unterjoching”). Since fascism emerged within the patriarchic structure of German families that helped perpetuate Bourgeois ideology and capitalist class structure, it was the psychodynamic function that authoritarianism played for the individual and that sustained it at the

micro-macro level. Authoritarianism, in other words, functioned as a “character armor” (German: “Characterpanzer”) which provided an external source of strength, security and certainty.

While questions about the chronology and origin of some of Fromm’s ideas remain contested (Samelson 1993), charges of “plagiarism” or “analytic amateurism” seem completely misplaced. Laska’s (1979) argument, for example, that Fromm’s work constitutes nothing but a “de-sexualized, ethicized, dogmatized: in short, theologized” version of Reich’s work seems completely unwarranted. Ideas never emerge in an intellectual vacuum but build on existing ideational narratives. Fromm’s brilliance laid in his ability to systematize and synthesize existing ideas and articulate them to popular as well as academic audiences. Fromm, for example, blended Freudian and Marxist accounts to create the idea of the “social character” – a powerful conceptual bridge between sociology, social psychology and differential psychology. It was also in Fromm’s work where the earliest contours of a truly integrative model of authoritarianism can be found. Fromm blended personality traits, affinities toward certain political orientations, ideology, threat levels and structural phenomena while acknowledging possible contributions of genetics to authoritarianism. This innovativeness lead Fahrenberg and Steiner (2004), rightly so one should add, to argue that without Fromm’s contributions “it would have been *impossible* to imagine both the Institute’s later theoretical orientation ... [or] the empirical framework used for the “*Studies of Authority and Family*” [1935] to “*The Authoritarian Personality* [1950]” (130). To better understand

how Fromm's work anticipated many of the "modern" insights, a short journey through three of his major works follows.

Conceptual Sketches: The Working Class in Weimar Germany

Despite the uncontested fact that much of Fromm's early work on character predispositions was still fairly orthodox Freudian, it already included more rugged sociological contours. He, for example, tried to link character traits to the nature of bourgeois values such as thriftiness, orderliness, love for duty and competitiveness (Bonß 1980). However, his first true inquiry into the nature of authoritarianism was "*The Working Class in Weimar Germany, a Psychological and Sociological Study*". This study – which was commissioned by Max Horkheimer – was planned and carried out by Fromm and his coworkers between 1929 and 1931. Theoretically integrating Freudian psychoanalysis and neo-Marxian social theory, the study represented not only an ambitious attempt to understand the psychic structure of German blue-collar workers and civil servants (Wolin 1995) but also provided a first applied opportunity for the Institute for Social Research. The authors (Fromm collaborated on this study) distributed a comprehensive questionnaire with 271 items that tapped into a wide range of opinions, lifestyles and orientations to 3,300 recipients. By 1931 1,100 questionnaires had been returned for analysis. While serious questions about the timing, nature of data interpretation and the degree of intellectual contribution remain (Samelson 1993)²⁷, it

²⁷ Samelson (1993), for example, argues that while Fromm, Hartoch, Herzog and Schachtel are listed as the major contributors for the study – most of the actual work was probably done and interpreted by Hilde Weiss. He also contends that the posthumous publication of Fromm's unpublished manuscript "*The Working Class in Weimar Germany*" was fudged and that earlier manuscripts probably did not contain "a substantial analysis of the character structure of pre-Nazi Germans" (32). He maintains that the

seems reasonable to assume that by the mid 1930s two manuscripts of the study were available for publication (Bonß 1980).

Building on Karl Abraham's (1925) reinterpretation of Freud's characterology, this study also provided the first crude attempt to theoretically connect and empirically assess how an individual's libidinal structure interrelates with the ideological and structural undercurrents of a given society (Bonß 1980). Coding individual responses within a set of three "orientation complexes" (German: "Einstellungskomplexe"): political orientation, relationship to authority and orientation toward other humans and then correlating those to a tripartite model of character structure (authoritarian, ambivalent and revolutionary), the study de facto laid the foundation for "*The Authoritarian Personality*". Fromm assumed that there is an affinity between the type of ideology and the type of personality structure. Socialist-communist ideologies, in his interpretation, emphasize the freedom of the individual and the rights of human beings. Authority relations exist but are rationally put into the service of individual growth, fulfillment and emancipation. Freedom thus becomes the basis for nonhierarchical interpersonal and intergroup solidarity. By emphasizing human potentialities and by promoting humanist values, left-wing ideologies create individuals with a more "open" and "empathetic" orientation toward others. In contrast, conservative ideologies – for Fromm – operate from a negative worldview in which human nature is viewed as inherently problematic. This necessitates strong authority structures and creates

interpretations in terms of the authoritarian/revolutionary character "have been superimposed on the data later" (31). Focusing mostly on the methodological flaws of the study and the problematic nature of the interpretation, he also contends that the "ambivalent character" constitutes a methodological artifact. Put differently, Samelson questions as to whether the earlier studies actually have looked at authoritarianism as their main factor.

individuals that have less concern for others, are more selfish and thrive in more hierarchical interpersonal and intergroup settings. These insights anticipate much of later theorizing on the structure and content of ideology and its relationships to individual-level phenomena.

Finally, Fromm also discusses the impact of reform-oriented ideologies which reject overly powerful authorities. Based on these conceptual elaborations, he postulates that the “authoritarian character” would be more attracted to conservative ideologies, the “ambivalent character” to liberal or libertarian ideologies while the “revolutionary character” would be drawn into socialist and communist ideologies. He also discussed the possibility of “rebel-authoritarians” which reject established authority structures (especially those that are seen as weak) but seek shelter in new authorities. Despite his conceptually convincing typology, the study found conflicting evidence. A large percentage of professing left-leaning individuals did not show the predicted emotional and cognitive makeup of the “revolutionary type”. The data found evidence of rebel-authoritarians within the ranks of the communist party which further complicated the conceptual picture. The apparent inconsistencies between manifest political orientations and latent character structures led Fromm to distinguish between ideological, conventional and pragmatic left-leaning individuals. He argued that the latter type of individuals (dispositional authoritarians) had no interest in the ideological content of the left parties and only saw them as a platform to vent their hate against the powerful or seek a way for revolutionary-directed social mobility. Interestingly, he did find some empirical support for this thesis. Social democrats, for example, tended to be

much more authoritarian than members of the communist party – which at least tangentially seems to suggest that an interactive dynamic between the nature of the ideology and the type of people that endorse it exists. While Fromm concedes the lack of empirical support for his theory he affirms the conceptual utility of his interactionist model. He argues that authoritarianism is an outcome of the social and cultural context (class relations in particular) which refine the “biological and physiological foundations of human nature” (74) in a rather “fluid” fashion.

While the study suffered from many methodological as well as conceptual shortcomings (Wolin 1995), Fromm’s early interactionist approach successfully managed to blend worldviews, ideologies, authority relations, group relations and personality traits. He thus probably provided one of the earliest in-depth discussions of the concept – a formulation that kept resurfacing – in conceptual reincarnations – in later authoritarianism research. Fahrenberg and Steiner (2004) have gone even so far as to suggest that if the work had been published during the 1930s, it “may have become the base for a psychoanalytically-inspired social psychology of authoritarianism” (146)

Theoretical Refinements: Studies on Authority and the Family

After their escape from Nazi Germany the members of the new Institute of Social Research published a preliminary report called “*Studies on Authority and the Family*” (Horkheimer 1936/1988) which – according to Leo Lowenthal – was aimed at legitimizing the scholars in their new host country (Fahrenberg and Steiner 2004). The study constituted a first attempt to put the Institute’s vision of an “interdisciplinary materialism” (which blends philosophical, sociological and psychological theories with

empirical research designs) to the test. The work was divided into three major sections with Horkheimer being responsible for the *“Theoretical Sketches”*, Fromm for the *“Surveys”* and Lowenthal for the presentation of the *“Individual Studies”*. The major goal of this work was to understand how the family transmits authority structures and thus how it acts as the reproductive link between social structure, ideology and the individual. The work is often quoted because Horkheimer – in the foreword – defined for the first time authoritarians as authority-affirming and “authoritarian characters” as submissive and masochistic individuals. While Horkheimer’s contributions helped to highlight ideological (e.g. cultural, moralistic, religious) and social-structural factors (e.g. role of the family) that shape the nature of authority relations and create tendencies toward submission, dependency and feelings of inadequacy, as Wolin (1995) rightly argues, it was Fromm’s conceptual framework that “served as the inspiration and model for the project as a whole” (53) – and his theoretical piece as “undoubtedly the linchpin and pacesetter” (54) for the entire project.

Fromm excelled in providing a materialist reinterpretation of Freud’s drive theory by moving it away from its biological determinism and couching it into a more relational framework. It was Fromm’s character types - the “revolutionary character” and the “authoritarian character” – that became the main typology for the 1936 study. In many ways, Fromm’s (1936) discussions seem to renew Kant’s question as to what draws individuals into the fangs of authority. Building on Freud, Reich and Karen and his own earlier work he further elaborates how societies shape an “authoritarian-masochistic character” – a character type that he considers the “default mode” for most

of human history. While couching his discussion in the structural and ideological realities of capitalism he especially helped to illuminate the role that the psychodynamics of authority play in creating states of social helplessness, ego-weakness and individual dependency, and how these states in turn create motivational affinities toward particular structural and ideational arrangements.

Focusing on superego development, Fromm continued to explore how external authority structures are transformed into psychological realities. Like Reich, he argued that the family – as the “psychological agency of society” – not only mirrors societal contents but also that it produces “socially-desirable psychic structures” (80). Advancing a theory of ego-weakness²⁸ he argues that since the ego develops under the psychic protectorate of the superego only strong egos are capable taking “over the defensive functions and repress instinctual drives without emotional reliance on the superego and authority” (99). In other words, strong egos develop a defense mechanism that is qualitatively different from repression (which is mainly based on rationalizing processes). By allowing unconscious drives to temporarily surface, ego-strong individuals are able to rationally access these drives and thus are better able to break free from the fangs of (irrational) authority. Since “drive management” reflects access to societal resources, Fromm also argues that character structures differ across different social classes. Mirroring recent insights in the sociology of emotions (Bartele 1997), he contends that the “strength of the superego and authority becomes stronger the fewer needs society can satisfy”. In other words, he saw repression as a phenomenon that was

²⁸ Fromm didn't use the term ego-weakness though he described the same phenomena. The term was first introduced by Hermann Nunberg (1939).

mainly tied to the subordinate social classes (which also opens the door for his discussion on working class authoritarianism – a phenomena that is usually attributed to the pioneering work of Lipset (1959).

Fromm also theoretically tries to link levels of individual insecurity to social phenomena by arguing that insecurity is woven into the ideological and structural fabric of society. He wrote that “the level of anxiety to which an individual is exposed, is socially determined” (103). Fear levels not only reflect how well society can protect against threats but also to what degree intra-societal tensions impinge on the collective and the individual. Ego-weak individuals, for example, will have a heightened sensitivity to threats, adopt a much more negative worldview and defer psychic autonomy to external authorities. Ego-strong individuals, in contrast, may mainly respond to “big and potentially insurmountable dangers ... with active involvement and thinking” (103). Fromm rejects arguments that view submission as an “innate drive” (see McDougall’s work for example) and shows how it constitutes a more “psychic manifestation” contingent upon historical peculiarities. Following Freud he argued that the “masochistic character” is mainly characterized by a “desire for obedience, submission and ... feeling[s] of archetypical dependency” (112). Rather than seeing submission as a pathological phenomenon he argues that the “overwhelming majority of the people in our [meaning German] society” exhibits this tendency. He also contends that sadism and masochism cannot be separated – hence his theoretical construct: the sadomasochistic character. The nature of the sadomasochistic character and the expression of sadistic and masochistic tendencies depends on the degree of repression

(forshadowing "recent" views that acknowledge that authoritarian facets can vary for individuals; see for example: Dunwoody, Hsiung, and Funke 2009; Funke 2005). Society must provide outlets to satisfy both sides of the sadomasochistic impulse which in authoritarian societies is given by "a system of upward and downward dependencies". Fromm eloquently writes:

"The masochistic orientation, which society creates, finds its expression not only in the ... relationship to authority but also in a particular attitude toward the world, fate, feeling toward life (German: Lebensgefühl) and a worldview which one could call masochistic. The masochistic character experiences his relationship with the world as an inescapable fact. He not only loves situations which constrain human life, he also loves submissiveness in the name of a blind and all-powerful destiny. Whatever seems unalterable for him depends on his social position" (118)

Here Fromm's relational views seem very contemporary for it links "worldviews" to the nature of authority and the type of social environment. He argues that the masochistic character loves the past because it represents social stability and continuity. Seeing the world as chaotic, unpredictable and controlled by forces outside the individual's control and having an innate tendency toward doubt and indecisiveness (a trait rooted in the character's fundamental ambivalence and the weak ego), the sadomasochistic character seeks security in submission and obedience to authority. Using external power as a psychological "prosthesis" the authoritarian finds comfort in a form of pseudo-certainty and pseudo-safety. Fromm also revisits and refines his interactionist model of ideology and character traits. Distinguishing between democratic and authoritarian authorities (which he relates to rational and irrational authority) he argues that while for democratic individuals "the power distance between the leader

and the followers seems basically surmountable” for authoritarians it is the “basis for the relationship” (124). Hence, “every ideology, which endows the powers [German: Gewalten] with the most wonderful attributes, are exceptionally attractive” (125). Since a range of cultural and ideological mechanisms create a set of beliefs of the omnipotence of authority and a feeling of “absolute distance”, these individuals tend to develop “feelings of unquestioning inferiority”.

Despite the methodological and theoretical shortcomings of the project and its often “overambitious” nature (Wolin 1995), this study helped to further refine the authoritarian concept and delineated the theoretical foundations on which the famous TAP²⁹ was (at least implicitly) formulated. Fromm’s discussions about the affinities between ideology and personality characteristics, the role of threat for authoritarians, the relationship between threat and social as well as ideological realities provided not only profound insights into the interactive nature of worldviews, ideologies, ego strength and the desire to affiliate with particular groups (and types of authorities) but also accentuates the emotional realities that underlie the phenomenon.

Intellectual Departures: Escape from Freedom

Fromm’s (1941) classic “*Escape from Freedom*” – which he published after his painful separation from the Frankfurt School – makes not only a stronger shift from empirical to conceptual work but also constitutes a further sociologization of psychoanalytical concepts (Bonß 1980). While he mainly tries to analyze “factors in the

²⁹ The authors of *The Authoritarian Personality* refused to acknowledge that – in part due to personal frictions between Adorno, Horkheimer and Fromm (for more information about this see Fahrenberg and Steiner 2004).

character structure” that make individual want to give up freedom and autonomy, Fromm couches his arguments into a form of attachment theory that highlights the force of historical contingencies in shaping not only levels of insecurity and uncertainty but also in creating individuals that will quasi-voluntarily reject freedom and embrace certain escape mechanisms.

True to his theoretical eclecticism, Fromm categorically rejects reductionist accounts of social phenomena and advances an integrative social-psychological model of authoritarianism. Distinguishing between static (e.g. psychologically-conditioned needs such as the need for self-preservation) and dynamic adaptations (e.g. need for relatedness to people, ideas, values or symbols), he argues that socio-cultural manifestations such as “religion and nationalism ... are refuges from what man most dreads: isolation” (20). Steeped in an experiential rendition of fundamental needs³⁰, Fromm contends that the need to belong allows individuals to cooperate, develop self-consciousness and create a referential system of meaning that offers a sense of ontological certainty and security. This means that psychologically-conditioned drives (or needs) have to be satisfied in order to avoid “moral aloneness”. However, achieving this is difficult because of the inherent tension between the process of individuation and the need to break away from primary ties. Since primary ties (e.g. ties with parents) provide the individual with a sense of security, an orientation in life as well as a sense of

³⁰ In his later work Fromm describes a range of different human needs: the need for relatedness, the need for transcendence, the need for rootedness, the need for identity and the need for a frame of orientation. While he acknowledged that needs can be satisfied in different ways he preferred a structure-ideology nexus conducive to the “development of man”. He also argued that human experience is both “affect and thought”. The conceptual separation between the two, for Fromm, are the “product of our own thought and does not correspond to the reality of man” (Fromm 1956/1981:15)

belonging, breaking free forces individuals to find new (secondary) ties that enable them to fulfill the same needs. Returning to his earlier work on character structure, Fromm argues that while ego-strong individuals are able to establish new “spontaneous relationship[s] to man and nature” (30) via “love ... productive work ... [and an] ... integration ... of the total personality” (30), ego-weak individuals are incapable of forming such ties and thus escape into new forms of submission. Put differently, ego-weak individuals “escape” into secondary ties that provide “strength which the individual self is lacking” (141).

Based on this rationale, Fromm conceptually separates positive freedom (freedom to) from negative freedom (freedom from). Seeing the development of human freedom as a dialectic process³¹, he maintains that structural conditions that impede individual freedom lead to “an unbearable burden ... [and] doubt” (36) that create psychological eddies that propel individuals into new forms of submission. While capitalism and the reformation have allowed individuals to become “more independent, self-reliant, and critical” it also made them more “isolated, alone and afraid” (104). Echoing strong Marxian insights, he argues that the self, in the interest of which modern man acts, is the social self. It is a pre-manufactured self that encapsulates a set of roles that the individual is meant to play in society. Contemporary “selfishness, therefore, is the greed that is rooted in the frustration of the real self and whose object is the social self” (121-122). For Fromm, modern society is geared toward flat emotions and a dulling of “the capacity of critical thinking” (128). Since the structural and ideological fabric of

³¹ A view he shares with Marx and Hegel.

society nurtures a sense of insecurity and uncertainty, individuals end up embracing one of three major escape mechanisms to acquire a psychic equilibrium: authoritarianism, automaton conformity and destructiveness.

Authoritarianism, for Fromm, is one of the three major escape mechanisms. Expanding on his earlier work, he argues that the “authoritarian character” (sadomasochistic character) comes in two flavors: the powerful and powerless. Each “loves those conditions that limit human freedom” (170). Linking social structure to emotions, he distinguishes between “rational” authority structures which tend to dissolve over time and create more positive emotional structures and “inhibiting”³² authority structures which perpetuate a state of dependency and lead to a more negative emotional makeup. Masochistic strivings are driven by feelings of inferiority, powerlessness and individual insignificance and a meaning of life that is provided by the “greater whole”. Hence, he maintains that the “irrationality of masochism ... consists in the ultimate futility of the means adopted to solve an untenable emotional situation” (154) again linking emotions to actions. The other type of authoritarian tends to embrace sadistic tendencies that are often covered as “overgoodness or overconcern for others” (144). What’s important, for Fromm, is that individuals with these tendencies are “dependent on the object of ... [their] sadism” (145). Strength comes from the object and hence the “the lust for power ... [is not only] rooted in weakness ... [but also an] expression of the inability of the individual self to stand alone and live” (162).

³² Fromm seems have replaced “inhibiting” with “irrational” authority structures in his later work.

A second type of escape mechanism which he termed “automaton conformity” reflects the strategy that the “majority of normal individuals in modern society” use (185). Seemingly a conceptual elaboration of the first mechanism³³ automatons are conceived as individuals that adopt pre-manufactured identities that lead to pseudo-thoughts, pseudo-feelings, pseudo-actions, in short: pseudo-selves. This argument is beautifully captured by the following quote:

“The automatization of the individual in modern society has increased the helplessness and insecurity of the average individual. Thus, he is ready to submit to new authorities which offer him security and relief from doubt.” (206)

Other escape mechanisms which Fromm discusses and develops elsewhere include destructiveness³⁴, social withdrawal and the inflation of the self. The crux of his arguments here is that without changes in the social-structural and ideological support systems that produce individuals steeped in an existential angst, society will continue to produce character structures that thrive on authority relations.

“Escape from Freedom” systematically builds on Fromm’s earlier ideas – but unlike his previous efforts – more strongly embraces neo-Marxian (as well as proto-Gamscian) arguments by further exploring how anxiety, insecurity and authority relations are rooted in the fabric of society. He thus offers a sociological theory of psychodynamics in which ideology and social structure “soften” the ego. In doing so, he demonstrates how ego-weakness (and thus perceived threats to it) not only translates

³³ Fromm, however, seems to treat the two separately.

³⁴ See “The Anatomy of Human Destructiveness” (Fromm 1972).

into submissive tendencies but also into a love for power. In short, his work clearly foreshadows contemporary views on threat-self interactions.

Maslow's Contributions to the "Authoritarian Character"

Apart from Reich's (1933 [1970]), Fromm's (1929/1984; 1936; 1941), Erickson's (1942)³⁵ and Else Frenkel-Brunswik and Nevitt Sanford's (1945)³⁶ contributions to the authoritarian concept, Maslow's (1943a) clinical study on "authoritarian individuals" (inspired by lectures that he attended by Fromm) reflect another important early development.

Maslow (1943a), like many theorists of his time, acknowledges unconscious factors and defends the theoretical usefulness of "character structure". He saw "character structure" as a "final crystallization of many determining forces" (402) by which he meant "largely (though not altogether) the reflection in the individual of all the environmental forces that have ever impinged upon him" (405). Maslow – like Fromm (1941) – also stresses the importance of worldviews in understanding character traits. Defining the authoritarian worldview as the "basic philosophy of the authoritarian person" (402), he argues that worldview needs to be seen as an "intersection of psychological and sociological concepts" (and hence bridges individual with collective value-belief systems). For Maslow, it is the authoritarian worldview that constructs a

³⁵ Erickson's study constitutes an in-depth account of the German Hitler Youth.

³⁶ Else Frenkel-Brunswik and Nevitt Sanford - two of the major contributors to the *"The Authoritarian Personality"* (Adorno et al. 1950) - conducted empirical research in the mid 1940s that is said to have provided much of the impetus for the A-S Scale and theoretical notions of a "pre-fascist personality" (Fahrenberg and Steiner 2004).

social reality in which the world is seen as “a jungle ... dangerous, threatening, or ... challenging ... [and] in which human beings are conceived as primarily selfish or stupid or evil ... animals [meaning that one’s] safety ... consists primarily in the power to dominate ... or to find a strong protector.” (403). While affirming the dual nature of the “authoritarian”, he contends that the nature of worldview necessitates behaviors that are “logical and sensible”. In an interesting discussion that foreshadows later work on intergroup relations, he argues that the stance toward social hierarchy in “authoritarian” and “democratic” individuals differs. Democratic individuals, for Maslow, have a “perception and appreciation of differences” but for authoritarians “differences are necessarily signs of superiority and inferiority” (404). Authoritarians also tend to over-generalize the superiority-inferiority categories and thus see all outgroups as alike. Driven by a strong “drive” (or “need”), so-called authoritarians have a “hatred and hostility against some group or other, whichever happens to be most convenient” (406). Maslow advances crucial insights into the nature of values systems – ideas that in many ways mirror later work on value-belief systems, ingroup salience and social identity. He argued, for example, that authoritarians tend to have an overarching value system while democrats often draw more upon differentiated and contextual value systems. Maslow’s insights here are especially interesting because they seem to suggest that processes of value-belief synchronization can act as a defense mechanism for ego-weak individuals by providing an overarching integrative social self (within a more hierarchical salience hierarchy).

In short, Maslow's work seems compatible with many of the major tenets of the earlier theorists. He maintains that every authoritarian individual is "both sadistic and masochistic" and that contextual factors determine which side operates. He – like Fromm – also cautions against the tendency to equate all forms of submissiveness and over-dependency as authoritarian (e.g. over-protected individuals or individuals with low self-esteem can exhibit similar tendencies). Presaging modern feminist ideas, however, Maslow views authoritarianism mainly as a male phenomenon. He argues that since the social construction of masculinity in Western cultures celebrates "power, hardness, cruelty", it becomes only "logical" that authoritarianism has systemic gendered origins.

Snapshot I: The "New" Model in Its Historical Silhouettes

While scholars of this period acknowledged micro-macro processes, they tended to spend a disproportionate amount of time trying to advance structuralist and ideationalist explanations. In their quest for a deeper understanding, they began – in particular – to illuminate how ideology, value-belief systems and social location create individuals prone to social conformity, intellectual dependency and/or blind submission to authority. However, it was probably not until the work of theorists such as Reich, Fromm, Horkheimer or Maslow that more nuanced notions of the "authoritarian phenomenon" began to emerge. These "new" conceptualizations postulated two mutually reinforcing sides of the authoritarian dynamic: a masochistic (submissive) element and a sadistic (domineering) side. Later work, however, also advanced more

relational accounts in which structural and ideational accounts shape individual-level factors – which in turn predispose individuals toward particular structural-ideational arrangements.

Ideational Dynamics: Early explorations of the topic looked at the functional role of formulized and un-formulized value-belief systems (e.g. political ideologies, culture, religious dogmas) in creating submissive and highly defensive individuals. Nietzsche's work on master-slave morality was probably ground-breaking in that respect. Highlighting the intellectual antimonies between "slave morality" which endorses values based on "resentment" such as humility, obedience or equality and "master morality" which encapsulates values based on open-mindedness, courage, truthfulness, trust and respect for the self, he argued that the historical struggle between value-belief systems shapes the experiential facets of social life. While Nietzsche was especially interested in issues of power (e.g. the value-belief imposition by the "herd"), later theorists such as Freud tried to show how ideational arrangements tune into individual factors. In a quasi neo-Kantian fashion Freud demonstrated how religious value-belief systems play on preexisting vulnerabilities of the human psyche (e.g. human needs, drives) to create a state of perpetual dependency and a reliance on authority figures. Many of these intellectual memes – in conceptual variations – became incorporated into later theoretical work.

Advancing pseudo-Gramscian accounts, Reich and Fromm further elaborate how submission to norms and authority, love for power and existential fear are hard-wired into the fabric of Bourgeois ideology. For them, it is the nature of Bourgeois values and

beliefs that provide collective rationalizations for structural arrangements and thus are consciously or unconsciously perpetuated by the state and other social institutions. Fromm and Horkheimer also show how anxiety levels of the public are ideationally manipulated by moving *particular* values and beliefs up and down the collective salience chart (e.g. via certain intergroup beliefs). Hence, unlike more narrow contemporary views, threat – for these authors – constituted a systemic condition that not only produces chronic threat sensitivities in individuals but also acts as a contextual amplifier. In short, these early contributors were keenly aware of how collective value-belief systems impinge on structural factors and how those in turn shape individual-level phenomena. They thus contended that collective value-beliefs systems such as political ideologies or religious dogmas – which themselves reflect collective representations of individual-level factors – can produce *particular* individual factors (e.g. the “somasochistic” personality makeup) and thus – via relational affinities – help perpetuate more macro-level phenomena.

Structural Dynamics: While ideational-structural symphonies often dominated conceptual explanations, structural solos – in which structural dynamics were explored in more detail – did exist. Many theorists (including some of the early philosophers), for example, stressed how social location can sculpt differential degrees of individual dependency. Advancing a Neo-Marxist and Neo-Freudian synthesis, Reich and Fromm, for example, linked class relations (in modern parlance: intergroup dynamics) to themes such as anxiety reduction, certainty management, resource availability, and/or the prevalence of “social taboos”. Fromm’s work, in particular, provided early theoretical

sketches for the idea of working class authoritarianism. He argued that unequal access to societal resources creates a situation in which social classes end up with differential cognitive-emotional make-ups. By showing how “needs” are subject to social construction as well as contingent upon a “psychic existence minimum”, Fromm not only elegantly tied the submissive tendencies of the subordinate classes to societal resources but also made a convincing case for the more affective consequences (positive versus negative emotions) that emerge within certain structural-ideational arrangements. The structurally most refined accounts, however, tended to involve theoretical explorations of family dynamics. Elevating the family to the epicenter of society, many of these later theorists explored how bourgeois values and beliefs translate into cold and distant child rearing practices – practices that then – via psychodynamic processes (especially repression) – translate into authoritarian tendencies supportive of the bourgeois status quo. Since these patterned parent-child relations also transmit authority structures it was the inner working of the family that for these scholars constituted the reproductive link between social structure, ideology and the individual. While structural complexity tended to converge in a grand-narrative mentality, some early contributors (e.g. in the work of Erick Erickson on the Hitler Youth) did attempt to illuminate how structural encapsulation processes can produce insecure selves that thrive in highly hierarchical, structured and ideologically unambiguous settings. In short, although the authors were aware of the intricacies of the phenomenon³⁷, they tended to argue that collective value-belief systems pre-

³⁷ See Fromm’s empirical work on “authoritarians” that thrive in and are drawn to socialist and

pattern social structural arrangements, and that these structural grids via social experiences can shape individual-level phenomena (and then, only more secondarily – induce micro-macro niche-seeking processes).

Individual Dynamics: In its attempt to understand the overall authoritarian dynamic, work of this period also spent a considerable amount of time delving into the nature of individual factors. Advancing more holistic notions of the self – as an affective *and* cognitive construct – most accounts elaborated on the experiential substratum that seemed to drive authoritarian phenomena. Having demarcated a structural-ideational framework for the origin of insecure selves (authoritarian “character structure”), the theorists mainly discuss how affective components (e.g. emphasis on socially-constructed and biologically-rooted needs/drives, existential angst, threat susceptibility, stronger need for structure) and cognitive elements (e.g. personal worldviews), can create self-dynamics in which the social self (in Fromm’s terminology “the social character”) begins to overpower the other aspects of the self. Threats against the group (or what it stands for) are therefore construed (consciously or unconsciously) as threats against the self (e.g. ego-threats). The “authoritarian reaction”, in other words, constitutes nothing but a defense mechanism that accentuates submissive and domineering tendencies and thus helps restore the delicate intrapsychic equilibrium of insecure selves.

In addition to highlighting the functional properties of the authoritarian reaction and offering plausible macro-micro linkages, these scholars also provided useful insights

communist groups.

into the possible role of *individual* value-belief systems. By linking “character traits” to the internalization of bourgeois values such as thriftiness, orderliness, love for duty and competitiveness (Fromm and Reich), by stressing the importance of personal worldviews in shaping social cognition and social behavior (Maslow) or by limelighting affinities between political or religious orientations and their respective “ideologies” or “worldviews” (Moore and Stagner), these authors clearly hinted at the functional nature of value-belief systems – *functional* in the sense that they can provide a highly reactive psychological buffer system for the individual. While the period still lacked an implicit understanding of how multiple social memberships may shape these self dynamics, conceptual seeds for more situationally-reactive accounts can already be found. Fromm’s more nuanced typology (rebels, revolutionaries and authoritarians), for example, offers conceptual openings that could potentially tie self dynamics to contextual factors. Put differently, Fromm was aware that a disposition toward authoritarianism does not necessarily need to translate into a strict adherence to value-belief systems stressing hierarchies, security and order but that these dispositions can be situationally moderated.

The Bigger Picture: Taken together then, the insights of this first period provide all the ingredients for a truly interactionist model of authoritarianism. While mainly advancing macro-micro linkages and focusing on the permeation of value-belief systems across the different structural layers of society, the authors were not completely unaware of the agency-side of the equation. By specifying, for example, how the “authoritarian” (the insecure self) differs from the “non-authoritarian” (the secure self), they were not only

able to demonstrate how the authoritarian reaction acts as a protective shell but also how affective-emotional realities can lead individuals to adopt specific (functional) values, affiliate with certain structural (functional) arrangements and embrace certain (functional) ideational formulations. While the degree of theoretical sophistication was often not met by an equally refined methodology, the period's insights continue to be groundbreaking for they illustrate how all four major pieces of the puzzle can be successfully placed into a fairly coherent relational framework. And even if the psychodynamic and Neo-Marxian glue that has held this conceptual framework together has since gone out of fashion, the realist core that it captured continues to hitchhike rides on the waves of time.

Chapter 3: TAP and Alternative Formulations

"[F]or some [individuals] prejudices are merely conformative, mildly ethnocentric, and essentially unrelated to the personality as a whole. ... But often it is organic, inseparable from the life process." Gordon Allport (1954: 395)

WW II and its devastating social, political and economic aftermath led to concerted efforts within the academic community to understand what Hannah Arendt (1963) has called the "banality of evil". Rejecting notions that Nazism and its atrocities can be reduced to the work of fanatics and sociopaths, researchers in the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s tried to explore the reasons why ordinary people would fall prey to fascist movements. Central to these efforts was the "*The Authoritarian Personality*" (TAP) which constituted a joint collaboration between the Berkeley Public Opinion Study and the Institute of Social Research (Frankfurt School) that was sponsored by the American Jewish Committee (Adorno, Frenkel-Brunswik, Levinson, and Sanford 1950; Altemeyer 1981). The TAP was well-received and sparked an avalanche of post-war social science research.

To provide the reader with a flavor of how the TAP and its conceptual alternatives not only represent new theoretical departures but also stress – to varying degrees – conceptual continuities, the following discussion will again sketch out some of the key arguments and criticisms advanced during this second period. However, it needs

to be pointed out that the purpose of the second stage of the conceptual archeology is again not comprehensiveness but merely scope. By illuminating the complexity of the phenomenon, the chapter tries to provide further evidence that legitimizes the need for a more holistic approach to the problematique.

Mainstreaming a Concept: The Authoritarian Personality

The TAP was originally conceived as a series of papers but due to disagreements over the authorship the publication was delayed and finally published in book form (Fahrenberg and Steiner 2004). Nevitt Sanford (1956), one of the principal investigators, later acknowledged that the project was not guided by an overarching theory but that the authors – coming from different theoretical traditions – were primarily interested as to why individuals accept anti-Semitic and fascist ideas. While the authors acknowledged a range of social structural, political and economic factors the study was mainly focused on the psychological dimensions of the phenomenon. Horkheimer (1950) wrote in the preface to the TAP that propaganda constitutes a tool that is being used by the elite to manufacture psychological predispositions. Believing that people need to be made aware of the “thought-controlling mass culture”, the authors hoped that the research would enable them to devise new strategies to prevent similar events from happening in the US and thus help strengthen democracy. Employing a fairly “modern” interactionist framework that aimed at striking a balance between situational, structural and psychological variables, the project designers set out to interview over 2000 individuals between May 1945 and June 1946 (mainly in California, Oregon and

Washington D.C.). While the sample suffered from an overreliance on middle class individuals and students, it did include interesting data from special populations such as psychiatric patients, army officers and prisoners.

The TAP covered broad conceptual and methodological ground but – in an implicit Frommian tradition – also attempted to link more specifically character structure to different ideological orientations. The authors (mainly Daniel Levinson) developed an anti-Semitism scale (A-scale) which tapped into anti-Semitic ideologies and an ethnocentrism scale (E-scale: mainly developed by R. Nevitt Sandford) which looked at the relationship between ethnocentric ideology and its relation to anti-Semitism as well as other social and cognitive factors such measures of religiosity, levels of education or intelligence. The authors (primarily Daniel Levinson) also created a political ideology scale (P-E Scale) which tried to capture liberal and conservative attitudes and thus allowed the researchers to explore the interactive relationship between ethnocentrism, conservatism and character structure. To validate these scales the TAP employed – among other statistical techniques – two illustrative case studies (Mack, a high scorer on the E-scale and Larry, a low scorer). Finally, operating from a working definition of authoritarianism as a “personality syndrome” that closely relates to anti-Semitism, the authors proposed an operational definition for authoritarianism: the F-scale(s). Coming in three different versions, the scale intended to measure “implicit antidemocratic trends” in individuals by creating – more or less atheoretically - a scale based on nine hypothetical item clusters: conventionality, authoritarian submission, authoritarian aggression, anti-Intracception, superstition and stereotypy,

power and toughness, destructiveness and cynicism, projectivity and sex (Stone, Lederer, and Christie 1993). Validation was done via an analysis of F-scores of the various groups, correlations with E and PEC and the Mack-Larry case studies.

In addition to the survey material, the authors also used clinical interviews (mainly done by Else Frenkel-Brunswick) that tried to connect character traits to a broader set of variables (ranging from sociodemographics, politics, clinical data, religion, minorities, parent-child relations, issues of childhood socialization such as attitudes toward parents, type of childhood environment, formative childhood events to attitudes toward sex, people, presentations and conceptions of the self). The major goal of these interviews – at least implicitly – was to understand the cognitive organization of personality of authoritarians and non-authoritarians. The TAP authors also innovated and applied a range of thematic apperception tests (done mainly by Betty Aron) that utilized projective questions in order to delineate the relationship between personality and ideology in prejudiced versus unprejudiced individuals. With respect to special populations, the TAP also gauged mental health issues and how or if they create vulnerabilities to fascist ideas (mainly done by Maria Hertz Levinson) as well as how expressions of criminality in prison inmates interacts with antidemocratic trends (mainly done by William Morrow). It is interesting to note, however, that apart from his theoretical contributions to the role of ideology, his discussions of the psychoanalytical dynamics in authoritarian personalities and his assistance with the analysis of the interviews, Adorno's contributions to the key issues of the TAP seem to have been rather negligible (Fahrenberg and Steiner 2004).

In retrospect, it is probably fair to say that by employing an innovative research design and by drawing on diverse populations (e.g. students, prisoners, mental patients), the TAP authors were not only able to further illuminate the complexity of the phenomenon but also re-articulate a character typology that emerges within the logic of society. The latter insight is nicely captured by Horkheimer's following quote:

"[A] basically hierarchical, authoritarian, exploitative parent-child relationship is apt to carry over into a power-oriented, exploitative attitude toward one's sex partner and one's God and may well culminate in a political philosophy and social outlook which has no room for anything but a desperate clinging to what appears to be strong and a disdainful rejection of whatever is relegated to the bottom. ... [This leads to] a dichotomous conception of sex roles and moral values, as well as to a dichotomous handling of social relations as manifested in the formation of stereotypes and of in-group-out-group cleavages. Conventionality, rigidity, repressive denial, and the ensuing breakthrough of one's weakness, fear and dependency are but other aspects of the same fundamental personality pattern. ... [And on the other hand,] there is a pattern [found in a democratic personality structure] characterized chiefly by affectionate, basically equalitarian, and permissive relationships. This pattern encompasses attitudes within the family and toward the opposite sex, as well as an internalization of religious and social values. Greater flexibility ... appear." (Adorno et al. 1950: 971)

While the TAP authors conceded that these types constitute the results of a "statistical analysis", they nevertheless maintained that these findings are reflective of a personality syndrome of "dynamically related factors" – factors that can help better explain issues of prejudice³⁸. Like the pioneers of the concept, the TAP researchers stress that historical, economic and social factors shape the characteristic family

³⁸ Interestingly, except for a brief mentioning in the footnotes, the "true" originators of the authoritarian concept – Fromm (1941), Erikson (1942), Maslow (1943) and Reich (1933) – are not mentioned in the TAP.

patterns in which the authoritarian or anti-authoritarian personality structure emerges. Conceding that a systematic analysis of these factors was beyond the scope of the project, they nevertheless argue that an eradication of this “potentially fascist” personality structure would necessitate radical structural and cultural changes because it presents the outcome of the “total organization of society”.

Despite an initial wave of enthusiasm, conceptual and methodological criticisms of the project soon emerged (Christie 1954a). Critics, for example, argued that the left-liberal orientation of the authors introduced interpretative biases that blinded them toward authoritarianism on the left (Hyman and Sheatsley 1954; Shils 1954). Masling (1954) took this critique to the “extreme” when remarked that it seems to have become “fashionable” to posit “all things evil ... at one end of the distribution; [and] all things healthy and democratic ... to the other” (33). Other critics also pointed out that many of the results did not fit the author’s alleged psychodynamic framework (Christie 1954a; Christie and Cook 1958; Duckitt 2009). Hyman and Sheatsley (1954) and that the different scores on the E and F scales may not constitute character traits but “tastes” reflective of social class. Furthermore, in a lesser known critique Asch (1952) argued that the TAP authors while formulating a relationship between social structure and personality traits failed to do the same for the reverse. More recently and moving beyond the “normal” criticisms of methodological and theoretical shortcomings, Martin (2001) goes as far as to argue that the concept of the “authoritarian personality” constitutes “probably the most deeply flawed work of prominence in political psychology”. He contends that the research team not only had muddled “nominalist

procedures ... with a realist interpretation of types” but also shown a complete “lack of interest in the psychodynamics of liberals”. Given the authors’ ideological blinders and the built-in interpretive biases, it was only logical that they would find nothing but “damning evidence about authoritarians”. Martin (2001) concludes on the rather polemic note that the theoretical legacy of the TAP continues to “haunt” political psychology to this day.

In addition to these theoretical concerns, critics have also addressed a number of methodological problems. While mainly directed toward the F-Scale, issues ranged from response set bias (Christie 1954a), issues of acquiescence (Bass 1955) and sample unrepresentativeness (Hyman and Sheatsley 1954) to interpretative problems with the coding and statistical procedures (Kirscht and Dillehay 1967; Martin 2001). While some of the criticisms seem valid, Kirscht and Dillaway (1967) have offered an additional theoretical angle. They argue that issues of acquiescence and social desirability are much less critical than content-related problems because the response set bias itself could be an expression of the authoritarian character. Finally, Asch (1952) cautioned against the use of attitudinal items for the study of psychological processes. He thinks that the observed response patterns may not represent an underlying belief system but reflect a “global antipathy to anything strange”. Despite these often lively criticisms – or maybe because of them – the TAP spawned a wave of new theoretical and empirical research in the decades to follow. While scholars often tried to find conceptual alternatives, Meehan (1991; 1993) in an extensive meta-analysis of over a hundred publications involving tens of thousands of individuals maintained that the F-scale is “an

instrument for the measure of antidemocratic and fascist tendencies that has retained its validity over time” (1991:61). He argued that four criteria support this conclusion: (1) supporters of right-wing extremist groups score lower, (2) members of antidemocratic and pro-fascist groups score higher than those of the general population, (3) groups that sympathize with antifascist and pro-democratic values score lower and (4) geographic differences in religious preferences in the US are in tune with the expected pattern.

Attempts of Alternative Formulations

Reviews tend to present the second period as having had an undifferentiated, uni-dimensional view of the authoritarian phenomenon (especially with respect to the nature of authoritarians) as well as a time where conceptual issues often took the backseat to methodological concerns (Duckitt 2009; Rhoads 1998). While there is some truth to this historic rendition, a broader view of the research efforts, however, tells a somewhat different story. Buoyed by the introspective post-war climate and inspired by the utility of the concept, the academic community not only set out to tackle methodological shortcomings but also started to substantially broaden the scope of the scientific inquiry. To rectify some of the psychometric issues with the TAP scales, for example, scholars began to design balanced F-scales (Christie 1954a; Kohn 1972; Lee and Warr 1969). These attempts often met with little success, however, because of low scale reliabilities and problems with yea-sayer dynamics (Duckitt 2009; Kirscht and Dillehay 1967). While pursuing operational innovations generally seemed to come first, the period also produced an avalanche of studies that explored specific aspects of

personality dynamics (e.g. issues of social perception, attitude change, cognitive rigidity), sociocultural phenomena (e.g. cross-cultural variations) as well as unique facets of group dynamics (e.g. role of reference groups, situational factors). It was these broad efforts that further helped to demonstrate that authoritarian phenomena are sustained through a complex “social ecology” of factors (Kirscht and Dillehay 1967). To provide a better sense of the nature of this research, the following section will sketch out: (1) a basic research topology of the time and (2) provide a more in-depth discussion of six alternative conceptual frameworks that emerged during the time and that – to varying degrees – help provide a more complete understanding of authoritarian phenomena: the *prejudiced vs. tolerant personality typology* (Allport 1950,1954, 1966), the *toughmindness-tendermindedness distinction* (Eysenck 1954), the *totalitarian personality model* (Erickson 1954; Erickson 1956), the *normative-humanitarian ideology distinction* (Tomkins 1963b; Tomkins 1964; Tomkins and Miner 1957), the general authoritarianism concept (Rokeach 1954; Rokeach 1956; Rokeach 1960) and the conservatism approach (Wilson 1973). By surveying the vast conceptual cosmos of these three research decades, the chapter again strives to demonstrate how the theoretical pillars of a more holistic model – albeit in conceptual reincarnations – are already clearly visible during period II (for more indepth reviews see Christie 1991; Duckitt 2009; Kirscht and Dillehay 1967).

Research Diversification: The Early Empirical Goldrush

Much of the post-TAP research reflects an academic goldrush geared toward a deeper understanding of personality characteristics (e.g. cognitive functioning, dogmatism and anxiety, psychopathology), related beliefs and constructs (e.g. political, ethnic and religious beliefs, alienation) and issues of social behavior (e.g. attitude change, group dynamics, leadership roles, complex organizational dynamics and small group phenomena). To provide the reader with a basic sense of the breadth and depth of this endeavor, the section will use broad strokes to render some of the research themes of the period more accessible (for more information see Kirscht and Dillehay 1967).

Many studies during this time continued to explore “authoritarian” personality dynamics. Early studies developed novel though often highly contested approaches to studying key facets of cognitive functioning especially issues of cognitive rigidity or intolerance of cognitive ambiguity (see for example Brown 1953; Levitt and Zuckerman 1959; Rokeach 1948). MacKinnon and Centers’ (1963), for example, showed that “authoritarians”, despite being less informed on social issues, often feel more strongly about the correctness of their own views. Harvey’s (1963) work broadens these insights by suggesting that authoritarians process information differently. Linking his findings to intense cognitive dissonance processes, he argued that authoritarian individuals assimilate novel material faster and are more resistant to changes in their concepts. Harvey and Beverly (1961) found that this phenomena is moderated by status differentials in which perceptions of source quality are tied to social status. In tune with

this dissonance rationale, the authors also found that authoritarians have a lower capacity to remember data accurately, especially when it comes from lower status sources. Other studies during this time employed experimental designs to differentiate attribution dynamics for non-authoritarians and authoritarians. Crockett and Meidinger (1956), for example, had research participants guess how other individuals would fill out their F-scales. Their results suggest that authoritarians were less likely to perceive the “good” in people and tended to engage in a form of black and white thinking. Moreover, studies on intergroup attitudes tended to substantiate TAP findings in that they found ethnocentric individuals to be much more authoritarian, conformist, uncritical toward cultural values, conservative and intolerant of ambiguity (see for example Triandis, Davis, and Takezawa 1965). Finally, studies also tried to link authoritarianism to psychopathologies but only found limited evidence for it. While most studies have looked at the negative implications of authoritarian lifestyles, some authors have suggested that some authoritarian characteristics can be socially adjustive in certain cultural contexts (for more info see Kirscht and Dillehay 1967).

Another theoretical theme that runs through the research period relates to value-belief affinities and personality dynamics. Kirscht and Dillehay (1967), for example, argued that since “authoritarianism at one level constitutes a group of general beliefs” (56) many studies have aimed to relate authoritarianism to political, religious, or other belief systems. While mostly treating authoritarianism as an “independent variable which disposes an individual toward acceptance of certain beliefs” (55), the period also further complimented earlier inquiries. Some studies, for example, have

shown that anti-democratic political orientations are much more attractive to authoritarians because democratic and pluralist value-belief systems engender ambiguities with respect to values, norms and views. Finding strong correlations between conservatism and F-Scores – suggestive of a general overlap between conservative ideology and the authoritarian construct – these studies tended to elicit strong similarities in personality characteristics between conservatives and authoritarians. Strong conservatives tend to be more dominant, anomic, alienated, pessimistic and with lower self-esteem, while the “average” conservative tends to be more hostile, expresses a distaste for weakness, is cognitively more rigid, paranoid and intolerant of human weaknesses (see classic work by McClosky 1958). Lipset (1959) qualified these observations by arguing that authoritarian attitudes can be situationally modified via social attachments that either conflict and/or compete with authoritarian predispositions (e.g. an authoritarian in a community committed to democratic values). Kirscht and Dillehay (1967) also pointed out that the empirical evidence often fails to provide a clear indication as to the relationship between political beliefs and authoritarianism. Their argument that apolitical “authoritarians” do exist suggests that there are different routes for authoritarians to satisfy their experiential needs (e.g. via a fundamentalist religious group or an extremist political group). In a similar vein, Greenstein (1965) argued that ethical prejudice, political conservatism and authoritarianism are conceptually-related but different constructs.

While the large body of literature on ethnic beliefs, prejudice, discrimination and intolerance would suggest a “general factor of prejudice” (Steiner and Johnson 1963),

studies on religious groups often challenge this view. Catholics in certain social environments, for example, are more authoritarian but significantly less ethnocentric than Anglicans, Jews, Methodists or Presbyterians (Knopfmacher and Armstrong 1963). Since not all authoritarians entertain rigid ethnocentric views but can entertain more nuanced intergroup beliefs, these findings seem to open the door for the mediating effects of structural and/or ideational factors. In short, scholars during this time saw authoritarianism as a phenomenon that creates affinities not necessarily for specific belief systems but for sets of primary beliefs. The social environment was often thought to shape specific beliefs but less so more stable values and primary beliefs. The nature of this research led Kirscht and Dillehay (1967) to argue that it may be more productive to explore the “origins of beliefs and their meanings within an authoritarian framework” (93) rather than to look for ideological affinities per se. To that end a number of conceptual integrations between social and psychological factors were attempted but seemed to have had little impact on later research (Pettigrew 1958).

In addition to the work on group conformity during the time (see Asch 1952; Crutchfield 1955), researchers also attempted to understand structural phenomena such as group dynamics or the influence of social context/location in shaping authoritarian phenomena. Studies, for example, attempted to link social structural arrangements with personality characteristics by demonstrating how membership groups help create, maintain and/or modify authoritarian “predispositions”. In an ingenious experiment, Siegel and Siegel (1957) demonstrated how status-driven membership-reference-group dynamics can shape authoritarian attitudes in college

students. Since other studies on membership group dynamics especially those involving prisoners (Grusky 1962), however, have yielded “mixed results” Kirscht and Dillehay (1967) concluded that “membership in particular natural groups does not necessarily create or change authoritarian dispositions” (105). A related line of research employed small group designs to study differences in problem-solving strategies in authoritarians and nonauthoritarians. Representative of this line of inquiry is Haythorn et al.’s (1956) study on interactional dynamics in groups with low and high authoritarians. They found that high authoritarians tended to be much more aggressive and expressed fewer positive emotions (e.g. less empathetic, less friendly, less agreeable) than low authoritarians – again suggesting an indirect link between structural arrangements, personality dimensions and affective dynamics.

Studies on conformity and social influence also helped to provide further empirical support that status and situational dynamics mediate levels of authoritarianism. Studies found, for instance, that high status individuals elicit much more agreement in “authoritarians” than low status individuals (see for example Elms and Milgram 1966; Vidulich and Kaiman 1961) and that “social location” can temper the expression of authoritarianism (Kirscht and Dillehay 1967). Cross-cultural studies also indicate that the more authoritarian a culture becomes the more authoritarian its members (see for example Niyekawa 1960). In the same vein, studies on social class have provided additional evidence that the lower classes – possibly moderated by educational attainment – tend to be less supportive of democratic values – at least in the United States (see Lipset 1959). While some of these findings have been contested

by some (for more information see Kischit and Dilleway 1967), they are illustrative of authoritarianism as a more subtle interactional drama.

Finally, the period also produced pioneering work on how normative erosion and perceptions of threat can lead to “flight into security” reactions and increase the likelihood of authoritarian behaviors. Sales (1972), for example, found that while conversion rates for authoritarian churches are higher during times of economic threat (e.g. the Great Depressions), they are higher for non-authoritarian churches during more prosperous economic times. Using archival data from two threatening historical periods (the 1930's and 1967-1970) and two nonthreatening periods (the 1920's and 1959-1964), Sales (1973) then further substantiated the threat hypothesis by showing that a range of contextual threats can increase the likelihood of authoritarian responses. Experimental threat manipulations (in terms of perceptions of performance success and failure) also seem to affect levels of authoritarianism and general tendencies to conform to the judgments of authority figures (Sales and Friend 1973)³⁹. In other words, scholars at the time were well aware of the contextual malleability of the authoritarian reaction.

Allport's Prejudiced versus Tolerant Personality Typology

With few notable exceptions, studies during this period tended to zoom in on specific aspects of the authoritarian phenomenon. One of these more holistic treatments of the subject includes Gordon W. Allport's (1954) *“The Nature of Prejudice”*.

³⁹ The threat hypothesis has received further support from more recent studies (see Doty et al. 2004 or McCann 1999).

The work constitutes one of the most systematic and comprehensive accounts of general intolerance to date. In this classic, Allport explores the roots of prejudice by illuminating in-group and out-group dynamics (foreshadowing insights of social identity theory), socio-cultural phenomena (including contextual factors, role of values, childhood socialization), personality dynamics (e.g. social categorization, cognitive processes such as selection, accentuation and interpretation), ideational factors (e.g. functional role of group beliefs) as well as provides a discussion about the role of fear, uncertainty and anxiety in shaping different forms of prejudice.

Building on his earlier work he suggested that prejudice needed to be studied at different conceptual levels: via historical, socio-cultural, situational, personality dynamics and structure, phenomenological (social cognition) and stimulus-object approaches (Allport 1950). He felt that a holistic view of this phenomenon was necessary because “group norms, group values, group membership play a continuous and interlocking part of the development of the individual’s mental life” (1954:206). Arguing that there is a “general law to all social phenomena that multiple causation is invariably at work and nowhere is the law more clearly applicable than to prejudice” (218), he set out to delineate the structural and ideational conditions under which “prejudiced personalities” are more likely to emerge. He argued that (1) structural heterogeneity⁴⁰, (2) vertical social mobility patterns, (3) times of rapid social change, (4) strong resource competition, (5) degree of cultural institutionalization of aggression

⁴⁰ This argument has received renewed currency with Stenner’s (2005) work. Stenner argued that the degree of ethnic and cultural diversity in a country represents one of the single-most important predictors of authoritarian tendencies.

and in-group favoritism (6) cultural stance toward assimilation and pluralism and the (7) nature of intergroup contacts⁴¹ are among the prime candidates that can lead to prejudicial undercurrents. Building on Samuel A. Stouffer's work "*The American Soldier*" he also advocated a more functional view of social conformity mechanisms. He argued that conformity needs to be seen as a continuum from sociocultural factors (conformity to convention) to individual factors (intrapsychic needs) – which – in turn – are amplified by specific ideological realities. Accentuating the functional significance of these two forms, he proposed a prejudiced-tolerant personality typology that not only renews insights of earlier theoretical contributions but also provides an interesting theoretical departure for his later work.

Allport's concept of "*Prejudiced Personality*"⁴² builds on the assumption that some prejudice is "merely conformative, mildly ethnocentric, and essentially unrelated to the personality as a whole ... [b]ut often it is organic, inseparable from the life process" (Allport 1954: 395). He advanced a concept of "functional prejudice" in which existential insecurities (or in his words "character-conditioned prejudice") shape an individual's "whole style of living, including his attitudes" (396) and produce an intrapsychic "threat orientation". While the roots for this personality type can vary from individual to individual, its expression tends to involve psychic expressions such as ego-alienation, longing for definiteness, or a need for safety and authority. Since the personality type is anchored in a deep distrust of human nature and steeped into a

⁴¹ He argues that intergroup contact "as a situational variable, cannot always overcome the personal variable in prejudice" (280). However, argues unless prejudice is "rooted in the character structure of the individual" it can be reduced via institutionally and culturally supported "equal-status" encounters in "pursuit of common goals" (281).

⁴² Allport likens this to the "authoritarian personality" or the "undemocratic personality".

repressive dynamics that precipitates in a dichotomization of tendencies (especially in the moral domain), a need for conflict externalization, a search for “clear-cut institutional memberships” with strong in-group commitments, a rejection of rugged individualism, a general preference for hierarchical social arrangements and a strong need for authority, prejudice becomes a means by which deeply-felt experiential needs are being satisfied. Allport writes:

“The self-image that ... [the prejudiced individual] needs maybe determined by his insecurity, fear, guilt; by an initial trauma or by family patterns, by his level of frustration tolerance or even his inborn temperament. In all these cases specific ethnic attitudes develop to round out, to bring closure to, the patterns of personality that is developing” (Allport 1954:324)

Building on Lowenthal and Guterman’s (1949) pioneering work on “American agitators” and indirectly mirroring the sadistic side of Fromm’s authoritarian character (Fromm 1941), Allport (1954) also develops a complementary personality type he called the “*Demagogue*”. Demagogues, for Allport, are power-driven individuals that advance conspiracies, manipulate threat perceptions, sell doomsday prophecies, nurture intergroup distrust and provide collective rationales for the celebration of extrapunitiveness. Demagogues flourish because the authoritarian type needs them – again echoing Fromm psychological interdependencies of the follower-leader dynamic. Using Adolf Hitler’s inferiority complex as an example, he argues that the roots of the phenomenon, like that of the prejudiced personality type, lie in “character-conditioned prejudice”. However, only in extreme cases does this lead to “paranoid bigotry” – a condition where demagoguery takes on truly pathological dimensions.

At the opposite side of the typological spectrum, Allport (1954) placed the *“Tolerant Personality”*⁴³. This personality type differs because it emerges within a different socialization context. Tolerant individuals tend to grow up in more permissive family environments that temper the development of an individual threat orientation. The more embracing environment also nurtures a stronger ego, reduces repressive dynamics and teaches children more acceptance of normative deviance. This different childhood socialization produces individuals that reject dualistic thinking, are less rigid, tolerate ambiguity better, have higher frustration tolerance, express more empathy and are more introspective. While Allport mainly employs a social learning framework (focus on rewards/punishments), he again offers hints that there may be “temperamental” predispositions conducive to the development of a tolerant personality. Empirical support for his theoretical ideas come, for example, from Levy’s (1948) research on anti-Nazis who grew up in environments characterized by less hierarchical family relations, interfaith marriages and/or exposure to genuine intergroup contacts. Allport also makes an interesting distinction between two different types of tolerance: “conformity tolerance” (tolerance = result of group norms) or “character-conditioned tolerance” (tolerance here takes on a “functional significance”), with the latter usually set within a more positive worldview. Stressing the role of personal values and personal worldviews he also hints that tolerance may be related to issues of value congruence/divergence. Finally, Allport distinguishes between militant and pacifistic forms of tolerance which he sees as expressions of an “intolerance of intolerance”. While some of these “tolerant”

⁴³ This again shows some similarities with the “anti-authoritarian” or “democratic personality”.

individuals constitute “bigots in reverse”, he maintained that expressions of tolerance do not only vary functionally but are also tied to different ideological support systems (e.g. communism versus democracy).

Allport’s later work – while diverse – further broadens and refines much of his earlier ideas (Gaines and Reed 1994). In an interesting paper on the religious seeds of prejudice, for example, he explores the interplay between structural, ideational and individual factors. He argued that theological issues such as rigid interpretations of revelation, a focus on the doctrine of election, or an endorsement of theocratic values can lead to a form of “divinely-sanctioned ethnocentrism”. He wrote:

“Religion therefore finds itself peculiarly tailored to the nationalistic, class, and ethnic cleavages and outlooks that sustain the prevailing social order” (Allport 1966).

While he concedes that the importance of theological factors is diminishing, he maintains that religion now sustains prejudice via structural factors such as church memberships. Church affiliation – rather than providing spiritual avenues – often helps reaffirm “ethnic and class values” of its members. Religious membership is thus functional in the sense that it offers a “tailored security” for the insecure, scapegoats for the “guilt-ridden” and ready-made out-group attributions for those that fear failure. Couching his arguments in a distinction between communal and associational types of group affiliation, Allport thinks that especially the latter type of church membership provides the ideal structural-ideational support system to breed individuals with an intrinsic prejudice orientations (also see Allport and Ross 1967).

Taken together, Allport's conceptual craftsmanship provides a wonderful glimpse into what a true social ecology of prejudice (and/or authoritarianism) could and should look like. While couching his ideas often into typologies, like his prejudiced-tolerant distinction, he was keenly aware that studying extremes not only reifies types but also potentially misses "plenty of mixed or run-of-the mill personalities" (408). There is probably no doubt today that Allport's contributions have had a lasting impact on the study of intergroup relations and general prejudice (Gaines and Reed 1994). His import to the field of authoritarianism research, on the other hand, seems to have been rather limited. As one observer has noted, this curious situation may be – at least in part – due to the social sciences' post-WW II "obsession" with positivistic and post-positivistic inquiries. While Allport offered an often elegant, always thorough and ultimately deeply ecological conception of the authoritarian phenomenon, he "failed" to develop a measuring device (Duckitt 2009). One should keep in mind, however, that this "disinterest" in operational definitions does not invalidate his theoretical elegance; in fact, it is in Allport's work where we – again – find the contours for a truly holistic framework.

Eysenck's Toughmindedness-Tendermindedness Distinction

Eysenck (1954) rejected the notion of an authoritarian personality altogether, although his conceptualizations often seem to flirt with personality dimensions. In response to the TAP authors, he proposed two dimensions of social attitudes⁴⁴ that he

⁴⁴ The discussion as to whether the authoritarian phenomenon should be "reduced" to a set of social attitudes, a personality dimension, a personality syndrome, a value orientation or value-belief orientation

thought would capture the authoritarian phenomenon better: “radicalism-conservatism” and “practical-theoretical”; the latter dimension, inspired by William James, he termed later “toughmindedness” and “tendermindedness” (Ray 1986). Proposing T as an ideologically more balanced measure, he argued that there is a cluster of social attitudes orthogonal to conservatism which he called T (toughmindedness). His empirical work not only showed that toughmindedness was related to extraversion but also that it was found on both ends of the extreme political spectrum. Hence, for Eysenck, the California F-Scale only tapped into one possible expression of the authoritarian phenomenon: a “right tough” version. While earlier measurement instruments were at least implicitly couched in theory, his approach drew – like many psychological approaches at the time – largely on inductive approaches. Based on a series of factor-analytic studies Eysenck argued that his first dimension expressed mainly political-economic facets (items dealing with questions about the nationalization of industry, abolishment of private property, harshness of punishment for crimes, out-group stereotypes, morality of death penalty and tradeoffs for peace) while the second dimension captured a toughmindedness versus tendermindedness distinction (items cover issues such as need of religion for humanity’s survival, premarital sex, role of church attendance, divorce laws, acceptability of birth control). In his later empirical studies, he gave a battery of social attitude and personality tests (e.g., the California E and F Scales and the TAT) to communists, fascists, and soldiers (control group) to show

often seems to get entangled in paradigmatic trench wars. These disagreements often boil down to questions as to how one conceptualizes self dynamics and to what degree conceptualizations account for individual versus collective elements of the phenomena.

that communists and fascists are more tough-minded, authoritarian, rigid and intolerant of ambiguity than other individuals. These studies also purported to show that communists were more overtly dominant and covertly aggressive, while fascists tended to be covertly dominant and overtly aggressive. Interestingly, these studies indicated that communists were less ethnocentric than fascists – which again open up the theoretical possibility of an interaction between ideational elements and individual manifestations. Eysenck strongly believed that his findings helped to demonstrate that social attitudes were “intimately related to the whole structure of personality” (see for example Eysenck and Coulter 1972).

Eysenck’s work received a substantial amount of criticism which led him to abandon this type of research over time. In a paper hyperbolically named “Care and Carelessness in Psychology” Rokeach and Hanley (1956), for example, critiqued Eysenck on methodological and conceptual grounds and claimed that he essentially “fudged” his results. Likewise, as Altemeyer (1981) rightly points out, Eysenck’s actual scale items for tough and tendermindedness seem more reflective of a morality dimension than a set of social attitudes expressive of a personality dimension. Likewise, Eysenck’s later conceptual change in which he argued that psychoticism and not extraversion constitute the main influence on T did not help his agenda either; in fact, it was generally seen as more of a strategic move to link his work up with the main factor of the influential Wilson-Patterson Conservatism Scale (Wilson and Patterson 1988), Nevertheless and despite its controversial reception within the academic community, Eysenck’s work

contains not only key elements of Pratto et al.'s (1994) later work on social dominance (SDO) but it also offers interesting insights into crucial measurement issues.

Erickson's Totalitarian Personality

Unlike Eysenck, Erickson (1954; 1956) proposed a model of "authoritarianism" in which he tries to explain why people are drawn into fascist or other totalistic movements. In his lesser known work *Wholeness and Totality* (1954) he argued that individuals who are unable to overcome certain developmental hurdles are especially prone to develop a proto-totalistic syndrome in which unrealistically negative and positive self-images are polarized to form an insecure self. For Erickson, totalistic movements are attractive because they provide an unambiguous structural and ideological environment that helps reinforce polarized identities. Since the totalistic organization of the self entails a sense of experiential anomie, ego-weak individuals affiliate with groups that provide them with clearly defined out-group scapegoats (to project the negative parts of the self-image) as well as ethical and ideological absolutes (that helps stabilize their contrast identities). Since ideological identification and group affiliation only provide a crutch and the self remains inherently unstable, ego threats tend to destabilize this dualistic definition of selfhood. In other words, like Fromm and the TAP authors, Erickson argued that ideology and group dynamics play a key role in legitimatizing not only the nature of authority relations but also in creating intergroup targets for projection. In contrast, individuals that achieve "wholeness" during the developmental process define reality in more fluid ways. Rather than perceiving reality

in sharp dichotomies, non-totalistic individuals create more continuous and fluid realities and as a result a more stable self.

While Erickson's insights have not made it into the general literature of authoritarianism research, they are important because they suggest that totalistic movements and their worldviews can deepen the sense of ontological insecurity of their members by manipulating intrapsychic and/or extrapsychic threat levels (e.g. by stressing the sinfulness of its members or the inherent danger of the world). While the ideological structure of totalitarian groups manages to psychologically disown its members, it also offers structural answers to regain a sense of security, certainty and trust. Individuals are able, for example, to perpetuate their "synthetic identities" via engagement in social practices and their adherence to unambiguous authority structures (Anthony and Robbins 2004; Erickson 1954; Erickson 1956).

Rokeach's Work on Authoritarianism and Political Ideology

While Eysenck was interested in clusters of social attitudes and Erickson in the interplay between contrast identities and ideologies, Rokeach (1951; 1956; 1960) attempted to advance a model of general authoritarianism (= dogmatism) that he thought would be free of ideological content. He critiqued the TAP and its built-in ideological biases and argued that it is the strength of beliefs and not their content that is important. In his classic work, *"The Open and the Closed Mind"*, Rokeach (1960) defined "ideological dogmatism" as "a closed way of thinking which could be associated with any ideology regardless of content, an authoritarian outlook on life, an intolerance toward those with opposing views and a sufferance of those with similar beliefs" (4-5).

He was especially interested in understanding the characteristics that make a belief system⁴⁵ “closed” as opposed to “open”. Arguing that different academic traditions often have treated personality, ideology and cognition separately, Rokeach tried to develop a broader conceptual framework that emphasized their interconnections. Seeing authoritarian tendencies expressed in all aspects of life (from fascist movements to academic communities) he tried to discern the “general properties held in common by all forms of authoritarianism” (14). Echoing Fromm’s insights but offering a new conceptual lens, he also advanced a distinction between the content and the form of an ideology. He points out that democrats can subscribe to democratic values but exhibit authoritarian “character traits”⁴⁶. Since the early work on authoritarianism did not provide a well-formed theory that ties together “the organization of belief with the organization of cognition”, Rokeach hoped to understand the “structural similarities between the way one believes and the way one cognizes” (17). As part of this general research program, Rokeach also sketched out an interesting model of political ideology in which he employed two terminal values (equality and freedom) to separate different ideological orientations (Rokeach 1973; Rokeach 1979).

Central to his theory of general authoritarianism – which systematically builds on his earlier work on cognitive rigidity and dogmatism (Rokeach 1954; Rokeach 1956; Rokeach 1948) – are his ideas on belief and disbelief systems. He defined the “total belief-disbelief system ... [as] an organization of verbal and nonverbal, implicit or explicit

⁴⁵ Rokeach used authoritarianism, dogmatism and closed belief system more or less interchangeably.

⁴⁶ In his later work (see Rokeach 1973), he qualifies this in terms of structural phenomena (e.g. group affiliation or value endorsement versus value adoption).

beliefs, sets, or expectancies” (Rokeach 1960:32). He argued that all belief systems are “asymmetrical” and composed of a series of subsystems that “may or may not be logically interrelated” (34). He set belief-systems apart from ideology by arguing that “[i]deology refers to a more or less institutionalized set of beliefs ... [while] belief-disbelief systems ... [also] contain highly personalized pre-ideological beliefs” (35). This meant for him that all belief systems are organized along three major dimensions: a belief-disbelief dimension, a central-peripheral dimension and a time-perspective dimension”. Acceptability of other belief systems thus reflects a function of belief similarity, belief centrality, belief salience and belief specificity. Interestingly, much of this work echoes major tenets of Sherif and Hovland’s (1961) work on social judgments with “latitudes of rejection” mirroring Rokeach’s disbelief system and “latitudes of acceptance” reflecting Rokeach’s belief system.

Based on this general formulation of belief-disbelief systems, he then derived a set of characteristics for both open and closed belief systems. Open systems exhibit less rejection of different disbelief subsystems, more fluid communication within and between belief-disbelief systems and a higher degree of similarity in the differentiation of belief and disbelief systems. Moreover, open systems are based on “primitive beliefs” that view the world as “friendly” and thus social categorizations are not based on authority relations. Closed systems, in contrast, show higher rejection of different disbelief subsystems, more structural isolation within and between belief and disbelief systems, a higher degree of differentiation in belief and disbelief systems and little differentiation in disbelief systems. Closed belief systems are based on primitive beliefs

that view the world as “threatening” and thus social categorization processes are driven by authority relations. This structural organization of beliefs, in turn, shapes the cognitive orientation of an individual. In other words, Rokeach tried to explain how social cognition and subscription to certain beliefs are two inherently intertwined processes.

To test his theoretical framework Rokeach (1960) developed a Dogmatism-Scale, which measures “the extent to which belief systems are open or closed” (19), and an Opinionation-Scale, which measures “individual differences in the extent to which we accept and reject others depending on whether they agree or disagree with us” (20). In other words, the D-Scale measures “general authoritarianism” while the O-Scale offers an alternative measure for “general intolerance”. Comparing different religious and political groups in England and the USA, he found, for example, that while people on the right are more authoritarian and intolerant than those on the left or center, communists and religious nonbelievers often score high on the left Opinionation scales. While more dogmatic people – on average – tend to be more anxious, he also found dogmatic individuals with lower anxiety scores (e.g. communists). He speculates that an increased ideological commitment due to structural reinforcement mechanisms can create protective outcomes. Alternatively, and somewhat akin to Fromm’s argumentation (1929/1980), Rokeach also reasons that these findings can be seen as differences between the structure and content of ideology (e.g. communism may have an authoritarian structure but an anti-authoritarian and humanitarian content). Somewhat blurring the distinction between structural manifestations and structural elements of

ideological systems, he maintains, however, that mechanism of “closed minds” – on average – should lead to stronger affinities toward more anti-democratic ideologies.

In attempt to provide a parsimonious model for the affinity between political orientations and certain value-belief portfolios, he advanced an intriguing two-value model of political ideology that still warrants attention today (Rokeach 1973; Rokeach 1979). The model grew out of a conceptual critique of the liberalism-conservatism concept which Rokeach thought not only lacked a set of clearly defined attributes or failed to account for spatial and temporal variations in its meaning but also mixed “ideological and stylistic attributes”. He also pointed out that the concept confuses authoritarian-antiauthoritarian phenomena with politics and thus has – without introducing a number of “ad hoc” criteria - difficulties in separating closely related political ideologies such as socialism and communism. Seeing differences in personal political orientations as manifestations of a social conflict arising from differences in perceived self-interest, he suggested that all major political orientations (even those in the past) can be reduced to a single desirability-undesirability continuum between two values: “freedom” and “equality”. Rokeach (1979) also introduces a useful distinction between the values of an ideological system and the values that an individual espouses. He writes: “Data about value differences, say, between Jews and Catholics are not necessarily pertinent to the question of value differences underlying Judaism and Catholicism” (193). He argues that collective identification does not necessarily need to translate into value endorsement because there are likely a number of other reasons “besides purely ideological” ones that lead to group affiliation and/or ideological

endorsement. Moreover, political groups – which individuals associate with political orientations – have been shown to deviate from classic ideological rationales. As minority parties like the Communist Party or the National Front in Great Britain seem to demonstrate, sociocultural and historical pressures can introduce ideological and structural idiosyncrasies. He thus speculated that individual, social and cultural factors form an interactive complex that condition particular equality-freedom orientations reminiscent of an “ideological predisposition” (which – of course – echoes insights from other theorists like Tomkins, Fromm or Allport).

To empirically validate his 2X2 values model he conducted an exploratory content analysis of representative writings from four major ideological orientations: communism (Lenin), socialism (Meadow, Fromm and Thomas), fascism (Hitler) and capitalism (Goldwater)⁴⁷. By counting the absolute and relative frequencies of references to terminal and instrumental values, he was able to compile value batteries for each political orientation. His analysis suggested that two values (equality and freedom) alone could account for as much as half of all terminal values in the texts. He thus argued that the patterns not only suggest a multidimensional construct but also that they are able to distinguish between the four ideological systems. While equality and freedom were the two values most often invoked by socialist writings, they rarely showed up in fascist writings. Statist communist texts, in contrast, stressed mainly

⁴⁷ The selection of these writings and typologies is somewhat curious. For one, Lenin only represents the statist version of communism and thus is much closer to Marx’s dictatorship of the proletarians (=socialism). Fromm’s writings fall more into the humanist and democratic tradition of socialism while Goldwater’s writings are probably more aptly characterized as a form of laissez faire conservatism (rather than as capitalism which would be better viewed as an economic system). Nevertheless, the attempt to link characterizing value hierarchies to specific ideological systems is interesting.

equality but made few references to freedom while conservative ideologies emphasize freedom but rarely refer to issues of equality. In addition of this exploratory work Rokeach also evaluated the data of a 1969 national survey for preference patterns with respect to seven presidential candidates. Looking at subgroups of supporters, he found that while all of these groups ranked freedom high they varied substantially on the degree of equality that they were willing to endorse. Supporters of more “liberal” presidents, for example, ranked equality substantially higher than supporters of more “conservative” presidents. While Rokeach acknowledged that the meaning of equality and freedom may differ across the different political traditions and that equality and freedom are values that can inherently interact, he contends that all ideologies – in one way or another – are “expressions of differences in the uneven distribution of power and, consequently, of differences in underlying orientations toward equality and freedom” (Rokeach: 1973:186).

Apart from Rokeach’s own work other studies have provided mixed results for the validity of his model. Support for his work, for example, comes from Rous and Lee’s (1978) study. Using a different set of texts for political ideologies (William F. Buckley, Jr.’s, “Up From Liberalism”, Staughton Lynd and Thomas Hayden's “The Other Side”, George Lincoln Rockwell's “This Time the World”, and William O. Douglas's “Points of Rebellion”), the authors found that Rokeach's two values were able to successfully tease apart different political ideologies and thus provide a useful methodological tool. Others, however, claim to have uncovered empirical support for disconfirming Rokeach’s theoretical assumptions. In a study of value patterns in the four major British

political parties, Cochrane, Billig and Hogg (1979), for example, found that the two values are not only too simplistic as a construct but also that they fail to meaningfully separate political groups. In a rebuttal Rokeach (1979), however, maintains that the observed value patterns can be explained by differences in social location (“local and demographic reasons”) and do not necessarily represent “compelling ideological differences”. Reiterating his main argument that ideological commitment does not equate with group affiliation, he contends that ideological differences in the U.S. and British political landscape are best explained by differential attitudes toward one value in particular: equality.

As Kirscht and Dillehay (1967) have rightly pointed out that Rokeach’s ideas helped to further set authoritarianism apart from ideological systems. While much of his work looked at the psychological dynamics of the phenomenon, he also provided profound insights into the role of value-belief systems, the structure and form of ideologies and the nature of authoritarian phenomena. Especially his theoretical ideas about the differential receptivity to political ideologies as a function of a person’s preference for two values (equality and freedom) as well as his work on value-belief congruence dynamics retain an amazingly contemporary flavor. While his efforts may have not been as successful psychometrically, his theoretical contributions have withstood the test of time. One of the clearest indications of that can be seen in Altemeyer’s (1996) recent efforts to develop a new valid, reliable and unidimensional dogmatism scale – a development that Duckitt (2009) has called “promising”.

Tomkin's Normative-Humanist Ideology Distinction

While the other authors have shed light on more complex social-psychological phenomena, Tomkins' (1962; 1963a; 1963b; 1964/1995) affect theory tried – in part – to conceptually distinguish between normative and humanistic ideologies by connecting ideologies to the emotional foundations of belief structures, the historical embeddedness of beliefs systems and the interactive relationship between personality structures and beliefs. Couched in a general efforts to develop a “psychology of knowledge” capable of understanding the “ebbs and flow of affect investment in ideas and ideology” (Tomkins 1964/1995)⁴⁸, he blended world views, beliefs about human nature, and values into an eclectic theory that helps explain the underlying structure of ideology. At the heart of this interesting framework are three interrelated concepts: *ideo-affective postures*, *ideological postures* and *ideo-affective resonance*. Ideo-affective postures, for Tomkins, refer to “any loosely organized set of feelings and ideas of feelings” (e.g. a tolerant attitude). Ideological postures, in contrast, capture “any organized and articulate set of ideas about anything” (e.g. a democratic political orientation). While arguing that ideo-affective postures are universal, he thought that not everyone takes on an ideological posture; unique social or psychological circumstances may interfere with its development. He, however, maintained that in practice there is a tendency for the two postures to converge via an “ideo-affective resonance” mechanism. This “resonance” essentially constitutes an affinity between the

⁴⁸ Tomkins has a somewhat amorphous notion of ideology defining it as “any organized set of ideas about which human beings are at once most articulate and most passionate, and for which there is no evidence and about which they are at least certain” (Tomkins 1964/1995:111)

two “postures” (or in his terminology: a “love affair”) leads to an “engagement of the loosely organized beliefs and feelings ... by ideology, [in other words] when the ideoaffective postures are sufficiently similar to the ideological posture, so that they reinforce and strengthen each other” (Tomkins 1964/1995:111).

Implicit in Tomkin’s model – like in Rokeach’s work on value-belief systems – seems an inherent but unstated strive toward intra-psychic synchronization that helps maximize communalities between “families of ideas and feelings”. Borrowing often liberally from other intellectual traditions such as biology, politics, sociology, history or art (McIlwain 2007), he stressed that what is important is not ideology per se but the experiential accessibility of ideologies to the individual. While individuals can potentially “resonate” with a range of different ideologies, historical and socio-cultural realities – particularly those in highly institutionalized forms – often stake out the psychological stage on which resonance dynamics are being played out. Tomkins also stresses that ideological systems are inherently fluid – adaptive in the sense that not only individuals attune to existing ideologies but also that ideologies often change to accommodate the ideoaffective makeup of the masses⁴⁹. This ideological adjustment process is especially visible for him during times of social change because these periods introduce elements of dissonance into the social-cultural system. Normative erosion, conflicting informational signals and shifts in affective realities – in a Durkheimian sense states of anomie (Durkheim 1897/1997) – may lead individuals to gravitate toward available

⁴⁹ These arguments are interesting because they mirror more recent arguments made by trait psychologists who use evolutionary accounts to advance a gene-frequency-driven explanation for the creation of ideological and cultural systems (see Hofstede and McCrae 2004).

ideological systems rather than toward those that match their ideo-affective postures (e.g. adoption of Marxist ideas in post-colonial Africa). This rationale is interesting because it somewhat mirrors Fromm's arguments on dispositional authoritarians that used socialist ideologies not as an ideological safe haven but as a structurally-supported platform to vent anger against the "system" (see Fromm 1929/1984).

To advance his theoretical arguments Tomkins developed a left-right spectrum of ideologies and traces the existence of so-called "ideological polarities" through Western thought. Building on examples from metaphysics (e.g. realist versus idealistic conceptions of reality), epistemology (e.g. empiricism versus constructivism), ethics (e.g. definitions of good as happiness versus good as self-realization), theories of value (e.g. intrinsic versus extrinsic notions of value), politics (e.g. the role of the state as a creation by the people for the people, or as an superordinate entity), the arts (e.g. Romanism versus Classicism) to child rearing practices (e.g. loving versus controlling approaches), he derives a number of theoretical "assumptions" that for him underlie the spectrum of left (humanist) and right (normative) ideologies. These value and belief differences pertain mainly to different conceptions of human nature, the role and nature of human wishes and desires, the teleology of need/drive satisfaction, different stances toward science, the role of power and reason in affect regulation and the concept of selectivity (Tomkins 1964/1995).

Humanist ideologies, on one end of the spectrum, tend to embody a set of values and beliefs in which human beings constitute an end in themselves – which means that within this framework everything that advances human existence becomes

valuable and what threatens takes on negative connotation. Since left ideologies affirm the inherent goodness of humans and since they view humans as having intrinsic value, they cultivate a positive affect in individuals and toward other human beings. Tomkins argues that this ideational phenomenon leads to a situation where “the left has positive affects per se and is at home in the realm of feelings” (Tomkins 1964/1995:127). Codifying unconditional respect for human life also means that left ideologies tend to nurture a unique relationship between affect and values. Tomkins, for example, wrote that for the left “a value is a human wish; [or more poignantly] we could say a human affect”. Hence, the fabric of ideological teleology is geared toward a positive need/drive satisfaction that emphasizes a dual concept of intimacy and detachment with the value object. It aims to minimize drive dissatisfaction and negative affect and thus puts power and reason in the service of maximizing positive emotions and reducing negative affect. Left ideologies put human reason in the service of truth and quest for human independence and strategically employ ideational elements to fight attempts to control positive drive and affect expression. The humanism that fertilizes the ideational substratum also translates into a different stance toward science (with a stronger focus on imagination, excitement and enjoyment of truth), conflict resolution (more emphasis on forgiveness) and ultimately a more “enlightened” orientation toward human “weakness” (a stress on tolerance and amelioration). In short, in Tomkins’s framework humanist ideologies are characterized by an active, creative, loving and open orientation toward the world. Seeing human nature as inherently good, left ideologies not create only more empathetic and transpersonal orientations but also cultivate more

intellectual permissiveness and openmindedness in individuals (Tomkins 1963b; Tomkins 1964/1995).

Normative ideologies, which represent the opposite side of the ideological spectrum, enshrine an affectively-rooted worldview in which humans do not constitute an end in themselves. Having decoupled human realities from value-belief contingencies, right ideologies perceive values as ontologically independent of and regulatory over human existence. In the ideological calculus of right ideational systems, everything that threatens human beings tends to be seen either as neutral or may take on negative or positive connotations depending on the types of normative behaviors that it infringes. Since values are seen as independent of “man ... men may or may not wish for the good, the true, and the beautiful” (Tomkins 1964/1995:129). In its phenomenological assembly of reality, right ideologies affirm the inherent “badness” of human nature and endorse the concept of conditional love in which positive affect is reserved for the “deserving”. Enshrining conformity as the normative imperative for human sociality, the right becomes “uneasy about and intolerant of affect per se, lest it endangers norm attainment” (Tomkins 1964/1995:127). Rejecting the primacy of human need/drive satisfaction, right ideologies shift the focus to norm attainment and norm compliance and ideologically-controlled affect regulation. Inherently suspicious of human reason, they also emphasize the inherent need for authority, normative regulation of affect hierarchies and rigorous – rather than imaginative – scientific inquiry. This focus on the normative salience of regulatory values and beliefs also translates into more intolerant attitudes toward normative deviance especially when it

comes to forms of human “weakness”. In short, normative ideologies see human nature as basically “evil” and thus put more emphasis on discipline, norms and rules. Seeing affect as the major cause behind ideology, normative ideologies interlock negative views of self and others with negative affect and rule-bound structural and ideological organization (Tomkins 1963b; Tomkins 1964).

To empirically validate his Hobbesian-Rousseauian framework⁵⁰, Tomkins developed not only an innovative Polarity Scale (Tomkins 1964; Tomkins 1964/1995) but he and others also tried to substantiate his claims via a series of empirical studies. Scores of the polarity scale have been linked to predictions of presidential assassinations (Tomkins 1964/1995), preferences for individualistic versus collectivistic values (Carlson and Levy 1970), attitudes toward war, peace and conflict resolution (Eckhardt and Alcock 1970; Eckhardt and Lentz 1971), assumptions concerning human nature, roots of religiosity, and political orientation (Aubin 1996), as well as a range of other affective processes. Couching his discussion in a “sociophilic” (left) versus “sociophobic” (right) distinction, he argues that polarities essentially reflect a “sublimated derivative of social stratification and exploitation” (Tomkins 1964/1995:160). Advancing a quasi dialectic relationship between the two ideological extremes in which “the full spectrum of ... innate affects [become] ...stratified”, he argued that “social stratification rests upon the affect stratification inherent in adversarial contests”. (163) In other words, ideologies constitute collectively-derived and affectively-rooted defense mechanisms that emerge

⁵⁰ While Hobbes (1651) in the classic treatise of political philosophy “*The Leviathan*” painted a dark picture of “human nature”, Rousseau in his two seminal pieces “*Discourse on the Origin of Inequality*” (1754) and “*Social Contract*” (1762) provided a much more positive outlook on the human self (a self that he saw as being corrupted by society).

within and are perpetuated by stratification systems. While he acknowledges that the nature of normative-humanist interactions can vary cross-culturally as well as historically, both ideologies do exist universally since they constitute two different approaches to creating and maintaining social harmony.

In his later work, Tomkins tried to employ a different set of metaphors to further his understanding of affective, experiential and ideational phenomena. In a quasi neo-Piagetian framework⁵¹ he advances a “script theory” that applies social constructionist insights to the affective domain. Seeing human perception as a sequence of narrative *scenes* that capture affective, cognitive as well as evaluative elements of the moment and *scripts* as a creation of “families” of scenes that guides social experience, he offered an intuitive account for the structural and ideational embeddedness of human experience. Since scripts differ in terms of density, interconnectedness and content, it is their structural properties that via affective amplification (short-term) and psychological magnification (long-term) processes provide the individual with a unique window to social reality (Tomkins 1979; Tomkins 1987). Stressing the importance of “social affects” and “ideological scripts”, he stresses that only embodied experiences are behaviorially meaningful because affect and cognition cannot be separated (Tomkins 1962). While Tomkin’s ideas have received only limited empirical support, Carlson and Brincka’s (1987) study of voters’ perceptions of the 1984 presidential candidates provides some insights into the theoretical utility of his ideas. Employing role-playing plots, these authors found, for example, that Republican candidates were more often associated

⁵¹ Tomkin’s notions of “scripts” mirror Piaget’s ideas of “schemas” and his ideas on “resonance” echo basic tenets of Piagets accommodation-assimilation framework (see Piaget 1937).

with plots dealing with normative affect (such as excitement, anger, or contempt) while Democratic candidates were more often assigned to scenarios involving more humanistic affect (such as joy, distress, and shame). They also found – in direct support of Tomkins theoretical predictions – that men were much more likely to embrace normative ideological postures than women. In another validation study, Aubin (1999) broadened Tomkins' ideas of ideological polarities and his script theory to elucidate the content, structure, and development of religious beliefs. He found that religiousness – as an ideologically-grounded system of values and beliefs – may constitute a biologically-motivated interpretive structure that evolves within the specifics of particular societal matrices.

Despite its rather limited intellectual impact on the field of authoritarianism research at the time, Tomkin's ideas warrant closer examination. Tomkins provided an interesting and inherently intuitive theoretical rationale that can help reconcile affective contingencies of collective value-belief systems with individual realities. His conceptual framework of "ideo-affective resonance" as well as his contributions on the affective contingencies of ideological scripts, in particular, not only echo insights of the ideological production of character types but also provides interesting theoretical explanations for the bi-directionality of individual-ideational affinities. While Tomkin's ideas have become more attractive recently with the renewed interest in emotions (Stone and Schaffner 1997) and the interest in more integrative approaches to ideological systems (Jost, Federico, and Napier 2009), they still remain rather underappreciated even in the larger domain of mainstream psychology (McIlwain 2007).

Wilson's Conservatism Approach

Another attempt to conceptualize authoritarian-like phenomena comes from G.D. Wilson and J.R. Patterson (see Wilson 1973; Wilson and Patterson 1968). Wilson argued that the “conservatism syndrome”⁵² entails a wide range of phenomena (or attitudinal clusters) that include “religious dogmatism, right-wing political orientation, militarism, ethnocentrism, intolerance of minority groups, authoritarianism, punitiveness, anti-hedonism, conformity, conventionality, superstition and opposition to scientific progress” (257). Viewing conservatism as a general “resistance to change and the tendency to prefer safe, traditional and conventional forms of institutions and behavior” (4), he maintains that the “syndrome” taps into a personality dimension that can be captured by a battery of social attitudes. Postulating an intergenerational consistency in ideological systems, he also stressed that “conservatism” constitutes a “generalized susceptibility to experiencing threat or anxiety in the face of uncertainty” (Wilson 1973:259). Like many of the other theorists, Wilson saw fear of uncertainty as a major psychological factor which helps to account for the organization of social attitudes – in his case the organization of social attitudes within a liberalism-conservatism framework. He argued that unlike liberal attitudes, “conservative attitudes serve a defensive function ... arising as a response to feelings of insecurity and inferiority and a generalized fear of uncertainty” (Wilson 1973:261-265). While his ideas echo

⁵² It is important, however, to note how Wilson employs the term of “conservatism”. In his introductory chapter to the *Psychology of Conservatism* he argued that he preferred “conservative” to “fascist” mainly because “most people would quite reasonably take exception to being described as ‘fascist’” (Wilson 1973:4). In other words, his conservatism construct taps more into extreme forms of right ideologies and thus overlaps with other authoritarian conceptualizations.

earlier theoretical contributions, the impact his ideas on the field are probably mainly due to his “successful” operationalization attempts. In the various versions of the C-Scale he postulates between seven (Wilson 1973) to ten attitudinal clusters (Wilson and Patterson 1968) that he thought were associated with “extreme” forms of conservatism (also see Wilson, Ausman, and Mathews 1973).

Empirical support for his ideas comes from a number of studies. Politically active conservative students, for example, tended to be more “conservative” than politically active socialists (Wilson and Patterson 1968). Limited evidence also comes from studies that shown negative correlations between conservatism and the self concept. “Conservatives” seem to have more insecure self-concepts than “liberals” (Boshier 1969). These patterns seem fairly stable cross-culturally especially with respect to racial, sexual, and religious phenomena (Bagley, Wilson, and Boshier 1970). Another interesting validation study explored the relationship between conservatism and cognitive aversion to highly complex and abstract art works. Tapping into different degrees of uncertainty (simple representational, simple abstract, complex representational, and complex abstract paintings), the study found that high scorers on the Conservatism Scale preferred paintings in the simple representational category and expressed a much stronger dislike for complex representational and complex abstract works. Liberals, on the other hand, preferred more complex and abstract paintings. In other words, the study showed a correlation between cognitive phenomena (e.g. the ability to cope with complexity) and adherence to certain ideological systems (Wilson, Ausman, and Mathews 1973). While it is not really clear from these studies whether

ideology conditions cognitive styles and/or whether certain personality dimensions predispose individuals toward ideologies, they provide ample support for the thesis that “conservatism” (as conceptualized by Wilson) entails different individual, ideational and structural factors. With respect to the latter, for example, studies have also looked into the relationship between conservatism and child-rearing practices. Using a combination of survey and interview data, Thomas (1975) not only claimed to have demonstrated the validity of the C-Scale as a general measure of authoritarianism but also that conservative child-rearing practices are a distinct form of child-rearing. While acknowledging that these more authoritarian childrearing practices are related to a general permissiveness-strictness dimension, the author maintained they are not identical.⁵³

Although the work of Wilson and his collaborators – especially owing the development of operational definitions of the construct – has become highly influential in political psychology (Christie 1991), its conceptual contributions to the field of authoritarianism remain fairly limited. Many scholars have rightly critiqued that the approach conflates authoritarian phenomena with conservatism proper (Stenner 2005). Others have taken an issue with the concept’s amorphous nature, raised questions about its dimensionality and drawn attention to problematic sampling procedures that seem to accentuate the “positives” (Altemeyer 1981). The fact, however, that Wilson and his collaborators were willing to psychologically lump such diverse structural and ideational phenomena into one psychological construct echoes insights from earlier

⁵³ For a challenge to this claim please see Altemeyer (1981).

scholars. It not only indirectly hints at an underlying reality that seems to transcend all these phenomena⁵⁴ but it also opens doors for conceptual refinements that try to understand under what circumstances either one of these “conservative” manifestations becomes salient.

Snapshot II: The “New” Model in Its Historical Silhouettes

As Kirscht and Dillehay⁵⁵ (1967) have pointed out, the second period has helped to bring “greater maturity and differentiation” to the conceptual understanding of the authoritarian phenomenon. While contributions in the 1950s (especially the TAP or Allport’s efforts) still retained strong holistic overtones, later treatments increasingly shifted toward more in-depth explorations of specific aspects and/or operational refinements. Especially the preoccupation with methodological improvements not only seemed to impede theoretical development but – at least temporarily – also contributed to the sidelining of important insights (some of these ideas, like the role of threat, did not make it back into mainstream authoritarianism research until more recently). Nevertheless, the period further deepened the understanding of individual factors as well as the nature of the authoritarian support system. Research, for example, made major conceptual inroads into ideational factors (especially with respect to the nature of value-belief systems, worldviews and ideologies) and micro-structural

⁵⁴ Eckhardt (1991), for example, focused on an overlapping set of phenomena and suggested that this underlying reality maybe a shared value orientation. More recent SDO-RWA also suggest a value-belief dimension or set of coalescing social attitudes at the heart of these phenomena (see for example Duckitt 2009).

⁵⁵ While the authors’ analysis only covered research up till the mid 1960s, the statement probably holds true for research done in the 1970s.

processes (e.g. in-group/out-group dynamics). These insights, however, should not be seen as new discoveries but more in terms of conceptual continuities and/or refinements. They helped to illustrate further how the complex social ecology of the authoritarian phenomenon is driven by an interactive, contextually-reactive as well as threat-sensitive web of affinities among individual, structural and ideational factors.

Ideational Dynamics: While the second period – especially in the work on the TAP - continued to illuminate how ideologies shape individual dynamics, there is also an increasing acknowledgment of individual niche-seeking dynamics. Rather than further perpetuating the view of early theorists in which individuals were seen as fairly passive, newer conceptualizations tried to advance more nuanced views of the individual – with individuals as actively negotiating agents. With this conceptual shift from the passive to the more active self, came also a stronger interest in the nature, content and structure of ideological systems and processes. One of the key themes here involved a general push toward further clarification of the relationship between authoritarianism and ideological systems (such as conservatism, anti-Semitism or religious fundamentalism). While the theorists of the first period were well aware of this connection (especially Fromm), the second period tried to flesh this relationship out empirically as well as theoretically. Work by the TAP authors, Wilson, Eysenck and Allport, for example, found strong linkages between “authoritarianism” and certain forms of religious and political extremism - though none seemed perfect.

While researchers often dissented as to whether to interpret this as indicative of a shared conceptual construct (e.g. Wilson) or different ones (e.g. Rokeach or Allport),

these intellectual exchange were – at least in retrospect – fairly productive. They led, among other things, to more systematic attempts to conceptually distinguish authoritarianism from ideological systems. Although often unsuccessful, these efforts did help to renew the interest understanding the major components of ideological systems as well as draw attention to issues such as the value-belief salience in generating authoritarian phenomena. The TAP authors, for example, found that ideologies that are especially attractive to authoritarians (e.g. anti-Semitism) often include many overgeneralizations, stereotyped imageries, built-in threat amplifiers as well as positive renditions of power dynamics. In the same vein, Erickson observed that a totalistic organization of the insecure self is often mirrored in the collective ideologies that the individual self embraces. Fascist ideologies, for him, provide hierarchical intergroup beliefs with well-defined out-group scapegoats as well as ideational elements that celebrate ethical absolutes. Likewise, Allport stressed that group beliefs can – depending on the degree of cultural institutionalization of themes such as aggression or in-group favoritism – provide collective rationalizations for ethnocentrism and other forms of prejudice.

Tomkins, on the other hand, drew more attention to the consequences of differences in the affective substratum of belief structures. Conceptually distinguishing between humanist ideologies (characterized by an active, creative, loving and open orientation toward the world) and normative ideologies (characterized by a more suspicious orientation toward the world that translates into a stronger reliance on discipline, norms and rules), he highlighted the intricate interplay between collective

value-belief systems (e.g. ideologies), social structural arrangements (e.g. affective social stratification) and self dynamics. Rokeach's work on open and closed systems as well as his theoretical elaborations on belief-disbelief systems and their functional differences also added to the overall understanding of collective value-belief systems. In short, the second period limelighted not only the crucial importance of certain values, beliefs and value-belief systems (e.g. worldviews and ideologies) but also showed how certain ideational constellations package threat amplifiers with defensive narratives that can provide the insecure self with a sense of ontological security, superiority.

Structural Dynamics: The period continued research on socialization (e.g. punitive childrearing practices, intergenerational value belief transmission) and/or social class dynamics that can lead to insecure selves predisposed to authoritarian reactions. However, researchers also began to look at how structural factors mediate, moderate and/or perpetuate authoritarian expressions. In doing so, they provided evidence that understanding ideological systems and/or individual predispositions may be insufficient in explaining authoritarian reactions. Research on group dynamics, for example, provided evidence that (1) status-driven reference group processes can moderate the strength of authoritarian attitudes, (2) authoritarian predispositions can be situationally modified via social attachments and that (3) group processes reminiscent of exchange dynamics (structural encapsulation) can lead to a value-belief reaffirmation processes. Studies also demonstrated that not all "authoritarians" (insecure selves) entertain the same rigid, hierarchical intergroup beliefs, but that the degree of ethnocentrism, for example, is often group-specific. Structural dynamics aided by particular ideational

narratives can translate into structural encapsulation processes that – as Erickson’s work on “polarized identities” illustrates – can not only increase levels of group conformity but also reinforce core weaknesses of the insecure self. However, by seeing conformity as a continuum from sociocultural factors (conformity to convention) to individual factors (intra-psychic needs), the time also renewed the more nuanced view of conformity. Allport’s insights on the functional imperative of group values, the triggering effects of structural heterogeneity as well as the contributions on unequal intergroup contacts, in particular, suggest that the authoritarian reaction is not a stable individual phenomenon but that it can be moderated via structural contingencies.

Researchers at this time also paid attention to the importance of more macro-structural phenomena such as economic recessions and political conflicts and their effects on authoritarian phenomena. As the work of Sales and colleagues (and to lesser degree that of Allport) has demonstrated, structural fluctuations can translate into collective and/or individual threat perceptions (or contextual beliefs) that can prime or trigger authoritarian reactions. Rokeach and Tomkins’ work also provided further evidence that what’s crucial is not the existence of particular value-belief systems (e.g. ideologies) but their structural availability/accessibility to the group or individual. While affinities (“ideo-affective resonances” in Tomkins’ or “functional compatibilities” in Allport’s terminology) may exist between the individual and a certain ideological system, the actual adoption is bounded by the structural circumstances in which the group (and/or individual) finds itself. In short, scholars during this time increasingly saw

authoritarianism not as a fixed individual phenomenon but one that is related to structurally pre-patterned affinities between certain ideational and individual factors.

Individual Dynamics: The second period provided further empirical evidence for the cognitive makeup of the insecure self – a self that within certain structural-ideational grids can become prone toward expressing authoritarian reactions. Researchers began to investigate more rigorously the cognitive and emotional realities that underlie a range of different self dynamics. Often couched into cognitive frameworks but never entirely losing sight of affective facets, these studies deconstructed the inner workings of the insecure self (“authoritarians”, “prejudiced self”, “non-democratic self”) and juxtaposed them to those of more secure selves (“revolutionaries”, “non-authoritarians”, “unprejudiced self”, “democratic self”). Among other things, these studies further demonstrated empirically that individuals with insecure selves (as compared to more secure selves) tend to exhibit more cognitive rigidity (often tied to rigidity of beliefs⁵⁶), higher levels of intolerance to ambiguity, stronger need for certitude and security, elevated levels of experiential anxiety, higher sensitivity to threats, stronger tendencies toward extrapunitive, a proneness toward category overgeneralization and much lower levels of empathy and introspectiveness. Like theorists in the first period (e.g. Maslow, Reich, Fromm), scholars continued to acknowledge the functional significance of conformity and certain forms of aggression (e.g. prejudice or out-group derogation). Stressing the intra-psychic consequences of ontological threats to the insecure self, research systematically revealed the experiential

⁵⁶ Attitudes here are seen as more specific beliefs.

undercurrents of the insecure self predispose the “individual toward acceptance of certain beliefs” (Kirscht and Dillehay 1967: 55). The major contribution of the TAP authors (and those that followed in their footsteps) thus did not reside so much in advancing new ideas but by providing an “empirical demonstration of the coherence of various beliefs, attitudes and values associated with anti-Semitism and fascism and of the functional role of this ideological system with the individual’s personality” (Sanford 1973: 40). By highlighting the centrality of the primary beliefs such as the “world is a jungle”, the “world is a threatening place” or human nature is “evil”, many of the scholars further spotlighted values and beliefs that seemed to functionally coalesce around these central belief structures and – as Allport put it – define “a whole style of living” for the individual.

While conceptions often differed on the particulars, many argued that adherence to certain beliefs or values such as social conformity versus individual autonomy (and the consequences for the nature of authority relations) or equality versus inequality can translate into individual affinities toward ideo-structural arrangements that help solve the experiential dilemmas that the insecure self faces. Tomkins’ work on ideo-affective postures and ideo-affective resonances, Allport’s arguments on character-conditioned affinities or Rokeach’s work on value-belief salience and congruence are especially revealing in that context. While the former two scholars stressed the affective and cognitive undercurrents that shape affinities, the latter emphasized the need to understand value-belief differentiation dynamics for insecure (“closed minds”) and secure selves (“open minds”). Put differently,

unquestioning submission to authority and conventions, subscription to ideational systems that promise stability, certainty and security amidst Hobbesian nightmares, the existence of less differentiated personal belief systems that reject more dissimilar value-belief portfolios as well as heightened susceptibilities to ontological threats form an interlocking system that experientially anchors the insecure self in a world that is perceived as inherently dangerous to the self. In short, the second period became much more interested in how individual factors translate into affinities – affinities that lead the insecure selves to adopt particular value-belief systems and/or affiliate with particular structural arrangements.

The Bigger Picture: The second dig of the conceptual archeology – while often revealing a much more nuanced picture – further highlights the necessity of viewing the authoritarian phenomenon as an interactive outcome of structural, ideational and individual factors. Beaming powerful searchlights onto values and beliefs (in the form of their “system” versions and/or as a component of the “system”), the period helped shift the focus from top-down processes toward more bottom-up processes. Rather than offering radically new conceptual departures, however, it is probably better to view the period as having added a number of new pieces to an already well-established puzzle. When taken together, it seems more reasonable to argue that the insights of period I and II are mutually complementary. They not only illustrate that both bottom-up *and* top-down processes can be involved in creating authoritarian reactions, but also that the nature of these processes is not necessarily fixed: different interactional permutations are thus not only conceptually feasible but probably more the norm.

Chapter 4: Conceptual Renaissance

“It is much easier to get a liberal to behave like a conservative than ... a conservative to behave like a liberal.” (Skitka, Mullen, Griffin, Hutchinson, and Chamberlin 2002: 484)

While the late 1960s and 1970s had seen a slow decline in interest in authoritarianism, much of it returned in the 1980s, partly fueled by the resurgence of Fascist groups in Europe and the fall of the Eastern block. Two new conceptualization attempts that spearheaded the revival project were Bob Altemeyer’s Right-Wing Authoritarianism (Altemeyer 1981; Altemeyer 1988; Altemeyer 1996; Altemeyer 1998; Altemeyer 2003) and Pratto and Sidanius’s work on social dominance theory (Pratto, Sidanius, Stallworth, and Malle 1994; Sidanius and Pratto 1999; Sidanius, Levin, Liu, and Pratto 2000). While both “traditions” have advanced influential operational definitions, the popularity of these scales probably owes more to their psychometric properties than to the conceptual framework that informed them. Be that as it may, this operational revolution set off an avalanche of new empirical as well as conceptual work. Often building on insights from social identity theory (Tajfel 1982; Tajfel 1979), many of these new conceptual “models” tried to offer new syntheses. To capture the important themes in this theoretical renaissance, the final segment of the conceptual archeology will therefore highlight a number of new frameworks and discuss recent developments in evolutionary biology, behavioral genetics and traits psychology that may help inform

future research on authoritarianism.

RWA and SDO: Two Routes to Authoritarianism?

Right Wing Authoritarianism (RWA)

A main contributor to this line of research, Altemeyer (1981; 1988; 1996; 2004) created a series of balanced, reliable and unidimensional scales (RWA), and thus rang in a new round of conceptual understanding of authoritarianism. Reducing authoritarianism to three major facets – authoritarian submission, authoritarian aggression and conventionalism – Altemeyer delineated a set of social attitudes and beliefs that he saw as a direct expression of an underlying “personality dimension”. Loosely drawing on social learning theory, Altemeyer’s revival project not only demonstrated the centrality of the authoritarian facets but also how they relate to different aspects of intolerance.

In a series of validation studies, for example, Altemeyer and other others found that right-wing authoritarians are more supportive of tough government actions such as wiretapping and illegal searches (Altemeyer 1981) or strong leadership (Altemeyer 1988; Moghaddam 2008). While the findings seem to support the submissive “facet”, critics have questioned as to whether the RWA scale really represents a personality characteristic or more of a value or belief orientations (Duckitt 2009:8)⁵⁷. In addition to his work on submission, Altemeyer also attempted to show how aggression operates in authoritarianism. His research – among other things – suggests that right wing

⁵⁷ It may be fair to point out that - unlike other scholars – Altemeyer conceives “personality” as a set of “social attitudes and beliefs” (and thus his arguments are internally consistent).

authoritarians endorse longer and tougher sentencing for criminals. Critics have again questioned as to whether this demonstrates “authoritarian aggression” or a general stance toward authority and/or the efficacy of punishment in learning situations (Altemeyer 1981; Altemeyer 1988; Christie 1993). Echoing findings from earlier F-scale research (Meloan 1993), other RWA studies have found that right wing authoritarians tend to harbor more negative attitudes toward “dangerous” and “dissident” groups (Duckitt and Sibley 2007), less favorable attitudes toward social deviance, and entertain especially strong aversions toward gays and AIDS victims (Altemeyer 1988; Altemeyer 1998; Peterson, Doty, and Winter 1993).

In addition to this research on authoritarian submission and aggression, Altemeyer also conducted a series of studies delving into the role of conventionalism – a phenomenon he tied to the adherence to conventions of the established social order (Altemeyer 1981; Altemeyer 1988). While his work muddles levels of analysis (e.g., a religious fundamentalist may reject the conventions of mainstream society while embracing the dogmas of the church), his findings provide strong empirical evidence for affinities between religiosity, support for traditional gender roles, conservatism, traditionalism, preference for social order and measures of authoritarianism (Altemeyer 1996; Tarr and Lorr 1991). Conventionality also translates into greater support for religious fundamentalist ideals, fewer doubts regarding religious beliefs, and stronger religious identification (Shaffer and Hastings 2007). Altemeyer (1988, 1996) also theoretically integrated the role of threat in his work by defining authoritarianism as a “dangerous world complex” (e.g., he developed the Dangerous World Scale). While

suggesting that this “complex” constitutes the heart of ethnocentrism, prejudice and xenophobia, he stressed that it is the threat to the in-group that acts as the primary motor behind authoritarian tendencies (Altemeyer, 1988).

Research using variations of the RWA scale have also “rediscovered” a number of *classic* authoritarian phenomena ranging from differences in cognitive rigidity and cognitive styles, the importance of environmental factors, the centrality of particular values and beliefs to modern personality equivalents in trait psychology. Altemeyer (1996), for example, found that authoritarians demonstrate a marked inability to deal with differences, are prone to compartmentalized thinking, exhibit problems in making decisions and have stronger tendencies toward rationalization (an observation he called “impaired cognitive thinking”). These “cognitive dissonance effects” also translate into higher acceptance of belief-congruent political messages and less receptivity toward information that may undermine the self (Altemeyer 1996). Other RWA research has explored the connection between personality traits and right-wing authoritarianism. Factor analytical studies, for example, have shown that RWA scores strongly negatively correlate with traits such as “openness to experience” and to a lesser degree with “conscientiousness” (Sibley and Duckitt 2008) – though the influence of traits can be mediated by “cognitive styles” (Duriez and Soenens 2006).

Some of the strongest evidence for a social learning perspective (for Altemeyer), however, is said to come from longitudinal research. This work not only unveils temporal consistencies in RWA scores, but also testifies to the possible role of educational experiences – though it is not altogether clear if the change in authoritarian

tendencies reflects exposure to liberal norms at colleges or other factors (Altemeyer 1988; Duckitt 2009). Altemeyer's (1996) studies (which included follow-up investigations after 12 and 18 years), in particular, demonstrated significant decreases in RWA scores over the average course of a college education, with more decreases for liberal arts majors than for other majors such as nursing or commerce. The formative effects of education on political attitudes/beliefs also has been found in cross-national studies (Farnen and Meloen 2000) and research that shows that acquired liberal attitudes and beliefs remain fairly stable over the life course (Newcomb, Koenig, Flacks, and Warwick 1967). Given its importance to the overall understanding of the phenomenon, RWA research has also tried to further explore the role of values, fear and worldviews. The RWA scale, for example, has been found to strongly correlate with Schwartz's "conformity and tradition values" and negatively with "self-direction and stimulation" values (Altemeyer 1998), higher levels of fear (Eigenberger 1998; Eigenberger 1996) and stronger preferences for certain ideological belief systems (e.g. conservatism) as well as more insecure psychological attachments (Weber and Federico 2007).

By navigating the psycho-ideational realities of "active" agnostics and atheists⁵⁸, Altemeyer – in collaboration with Bruce E. Hunsberger – has also tried to broaden the academic understanding of dogmatism, zealotry, prejudice and ethnocentrism (Hunsberger and Altemeyer 2006). Using a newly designed dogmatism scale, the authors found – somewhat mirroring Rokeach's insights a few decades earlier – that "you can find high levels of closedmindedness at each end of the belief spectrum" (67).

⁵⁸ The data came mainly from members of American and Canadian non-believer clubs and religious fundamentalist groups (and thus cover the entire "religious" spectrum).

Active atheists often seemed very rigid about their own beliefs, although they tend to be less zealous about wanting to push their own viewpoints onto others. Active atheists also exhibit a “huge favoritism for their own kind and an equally massive dislike of [religious] fundamentalists” (84). While curious, given the lack of empirical support in the study, the authors maintain that the *average* atheist should not only make a “poor sergeant ... for the Atheist Armed Forces” (75), but also be more at home in “one of the least authoritarian groups you can find” (e.g., less punitive, more wary about government abuse, less prone to compartmentalized thinking, relatively unprejudiced, more resistant to conformity, more self-aware, more open to evidence, less dogmatic). These findings reintroduce old questions about the role of belief salience and strength in creating shaping interactional dynamics and intrapsychic realities. Since “professional” (active) atheists are predicted to be more authoritarian than “lay” (average) atheists, it seems reasonable to assume that self dynamics (e.g. the importance of the social self for the overall integrity of the self) can play a key role in mediating, triggering and/or inhibiting authoritarian tendencies.

While Altemeyer’s efforts have helped to revive the general interest in authoritarianism, his work has not been without criticism. Theoretical challenges have been directed at conceptual, psychometric and interpretive issues (Christie 1991; Duckitt 2009; Hunsberger and Altemeyer 2006; Martin 2001), critiques that have helped to develop major extensions and modifications of the RWA framework (Dunwoody, Hsiung, and Funke 2009; Funke 2005; Stellmacher and Petzel 2005; Stellmacher 2004). While some of these innovations further clarified what it actually is that is being

measured (e.g. attitudes, beliefs, values or ideologies) or how authoritarianism should be defined, many of these so-called “new” findings continue to “rediscover” classic insights such as the role of submission, aggression, conventionalism, ideology, threat, fear, uncertainty, insecurity, cognitive functioning, personality traits and/or socialization dynamics. In short, Altemeyer’s broad and often highly systematic work has helped to set a new benchmark for contemporary scholars of authoritarianism.

Social Dominance Orientation (SDO)

In the 1990s, Felicia Pratto, Jim Sidanius and others began developing social dominance theory and introduced a new empirical tool: the SDO scale (Pratto, Sidanius, Stallworth, and Malle 1994; Sidanius and Pratto 1999; Sidanius, Levin, Liu, and Pratto 2000). In its original formulations, “social dominance” was conceived of as the degree of an individual’s “preference for inequality among social groups” or, put differently, a “general attitude orientation toward intergroup relations, reflecting whether one generally prefers such relations to be equal” as opposed to hierarchical (Pratto et al. 1994: 742).⁵⁹ Social dominance theory – which strongly borrows from evolutionary biology – conceives individuals as plotting along a continuum from social “dominators”, who tend to be males who seek out “hierarchy-enhancing” social roles and gravitate toward more hierarchical groups and ideologies (e.g., meritocracy and racism), to “non-dominators”, who tend to be women who seek hierarchy-attenuating social roles as well as groups and ideologies that deemphasize intragroup differences. Often sidestepping

⁵⁹ More recently, Jost and Thompson (2000) have suggested that the SDO Scale actually measures two related facets: a desire for group-based dominance *and* an opposition to equality.

affective realities arising from structural dynamics such as childrearing practices or childhood socialization, social dominance theory tries to show how evolutionary, biological and societal realities have created ideological belief systems that minimize intergroup conflict by legitimizing the hegemony of some group (or groups) over others.

To institutionalize this ideational coup d'état, social dominance theory argues that the dominant group(s) tend(s) to create "*legitimizing myths*" that can take a number of different forms: "*paternalistic myths*" (which justify the necessity of leadership of certain groups over the "weak", "inferior" or "subordinate" groups), "*reciprocal myths*" (which advance more symbiotic relations between the "dominant" and "subordinate" groups) or "*sacred myths*" (which define intergroup relations based on forms of divine right). Having justifications for intergroup hierarchies woven into the ideational fabric also means that SDO scores tend to correlate negatively with empathy, tolerance, communality, and altruism (Sidanius and Pratto 1999). While SDO was originally welcomed as a measure of the "second authoritarian personality", it has increasingly come to be seen as a more enduring set of values or beliefs that predict "authoritarian" intergroup phenomena (Duckitt 2009). Put differently, SDO and RWA are viewed as measuring qualitatively different aspects of the authoritarian phenomenon (Altemeyer 1998; Duckitt 2001). RWA primarily taps into issues of social control, submission to and respect for authority as well as conformity to conventional social norms, and SDO reflects beliefs of social and economic inequality and the nature of intergroup relations. Both constructs thus relate to different types of core beliefs: RWA correlates more strongly to beliefs that view the world as a "dangerous and

threatening” place, and SDO to conceptions of the world in a more social Darwinist tinge (see Duckitt 2001, Duckitt 2009).

Although SDO has been postulated as universal phenomena, research suggests that SDO “scores” can vary substantially across different contexts, groups, and individuals (Pratto, Sidanius, Stallworth, and Malle 1994; Sidanius and Pratto 1999). One study, for example, has shown that only social dominators react with prejudice in salient intergroup contexts (Pratto and Shih 2000). This suggests that group identification alone may not be sufficient to induce intolerance, but that certain values and beliefs mediate (or drive) that expression. Other studies have looked at how “consensual” SDO relates to legitimizing myths. Results suggest that members of higher status groups, for example, tend to have much higher “consensual” SDO scores. In other words, consensual social dominators (as opposed to “pragmatic” social dominators) not only seem to rely more strongly on legitimizing ideologies, but apparently thrive on ideological asymmetries (Sidanius, Levin, and Pratto 1996). Finally, some studies have examined the stability of SDO/RWA across different situational contexts. Experimentally manipulating group salience and intergroup relations, Lehmiller and Schmitt (2007), for instance, found that group-based dominance can vary with situational contexts. While the experimental setup may not have captured “real-life” authoritarianism (but only situationally-induced social attitudes), the study provides useful insights into how strongly ideologies, social attitudes, group salience and intergroup relations seem to intertwine.

It may be interesting to note how closely these two “new” SDO-RWA constructs seem to mirror the classic notions of the “sodomasochistic character” (Fromm 1941), an individual that tends to view the world as a dangerous, threatening and competitive place (Adorno, Frenkel-Brunswik, Levinson, and Sanford 1950; Fromm 1936). As a result, “authoritarians” not only tend to seek comfort in the arms of strong authority figures and hierarchical groups, but will also defend the enclaves of their chosen exile by all means necessary (Fromm 1941). Despite some historical continuities, SDO research has helped to further clarify intergroup aspects of the authoritarian phenomenon, spotlighted the importance of social worldviews in it, and provided more rigorous empirical support for the centrality of interaction between personality and value-belief systems (Van Hiel, Cornelis, and Roets 2007).

RWA versus SDO: Siamese Twins?

A closer look at these two research traditions suggests that many of the substantive findings have not changed drastically. While research has become more systematic, more empirical and more nuanced, it has also created an analytical and conceptual monoculture in which the fruits of conceptual continuities are too often forgotten. The culture of psychometric “fetishism” (Stenner 2005) which the two scales have set into motion – while helping to generate a flood of new and exciting studies – may actually have impeded rather than promoted conceptual progress.

Recent research has begun to elicit how authoritarian phenomena relate to social structural and ideational factors (Duckitt and Fisher 2003; Schmidt, Bamberg, Davidov, Herrmann, and Schwartz 2007). Studies on cross-national variation, for

example, have shown that levels of right-wing authoritarianism (RWA) and social dominance (SDO) are not individual-level constants but heavily depend on the degree of ideological differentiation within society. Countries with strong ideological contrasts have much higher RWA-SDO associations than those with weaker – though this relationship appears to be moderated by the degree of political identification (Dallago, Cima, Roccato, Ricolfi, and Mirisola 2008; Mirisola, Sibley, Boca, and Duckitt 2007; Roccato and Ricolfi 2005). RWA-SDO correlation seem especially high in Western Europe, lower in North America and can even become negative in certain geopolitical areas such as Eastern Europe (Duckitt 2001; Van Hiel, Duriez, and Kossowska 2006). Structural analyses of socio-political attitudes and socio-cultural values have therefore suggested that RWA and SDO constitute “orthogonal dimensions” (Saucier 2000). Duckitt (2009) speculates that the “social attitudes” in both scales encapsulate two “higher order social-cultural values” (16) with RWA tapping into tradition, social conformity, cohesion and social harmony and SDO capturing values such as power, dominance, hierarchy or inequality. It may be interesting to recall how much this echoes earlier insights. While theorists differ in their focus on individual and/or collective aspects, it seems reasonable to argue that Rokeach’s two values “equality” (as the axiological inverse to SDO’s stress on intergroup inequalities) and “freedom” (as the axiological opposite of RWA’s focus on social conformity) , for example, tap into the same realist bedrock as SDO and RWA do (Rokeach 1979).

Finally, individuals that score high on both SDO and RWA – also called “double-highs” – exhibit the highest levels of prejudice. In the words of Bob Altemeyer (2004:

421), this suggests that these individuals “combine the worst elements of each kind of personality, being power-hungry, unsupportive of equality, manipulative, and amoral, as social dominators are in general, while also being religiously ethnocentric and dogmatic, as right-wing authoritarians tend to be”. While he acknowledges that these “extremists” only make up a small proportion of the overall population, he maintains that they have a “considerable impact on society because they are well-positioned to become the leaders of prejudiced right-wing political movements”. While this seems plausible, others have argued that these results reflect additive rather than interactive effects (Duckitt 2009; Sibley and Duckitt 2008). Hence, future research will have to settle as to whether RWA and SDO constitute two different *expressions* of and/or two separate *tickets* to the “authoritarian specter”.

Conceptual Syntheses and Alternative Formulations

The relentless efforts of this RWA-SDO dynamo have ignited a conceptual wildfire that has spread across the entire field of authoritarianism research. Today, it has become virtually impossible to capture the vitality, diversity and dynamism of this academic endeavor. While continuing on the traditional psychological trajectories – though often with more nuanced inquiries – some scholars have slowly begun to shift their focus toward the understanding of group dynamics, situational contingencies, threat activation processes, value-belief systems (e.g. in the form of worldviews) and/or the nature of ideological interactions. Other theorists have worked on uncertainty-threat models that promise to better integrate personality traits, needs, levels of

uncertainty, threat and political orientation (e.g. Jost, Napier, Thorisdottir, Gosling, Palfai, and Ostafin 2007), and have also explored potential genetic contributions to authoritarianism (Corson 1997; McCourt et al. 1999; Shikishma, Ando, Yamagata, Ozaki, Takahashi, and Nonaka 2008; Stössel, Kämpfe, and Riemann 2006). Finally, the period has produced efforts to advance evolutionary explanations that highlight the socially-adaptive qualities of authoritarian processes (Hastings and Shaffer 2008; Kessler and Cohrs 2008). While each of these inquiries would deserve a chapter of its own, the following discussion will only discuss – with broad strokes one might add – eight of the arguably most influential models: Duckitt’s Group Cohesion Model (GCM), Duckitt’s Dual-Process Motivational Model (DPMM), Kreindler’s Dual-Group-Process Model (DGPM), Feldman and Stenner’s Interactional Models (IM), Stellmacher and Petzel’s Interactionist Group Authoritarian Model (IGAM), Oesterreich’s Authoritarian Reaction Model (ARM) and Jost’s work on Motivated Social Cognition and ideological systems. Before situating these findings within the “new” conceptual framework, however, chapter 4 will briefly touch upon recent work that seems to implicate genetic and evolutionary contributions to the phenomenon, contributions that add to our sociological understanding of authoritarianism phenomena.

Duckitt’s Group Cohesion Model (GCM)

Duckitt’s (1989) early work agrees with Altemeyer’s conceptual trinity but re-frames it in terms of group identification processes. While Altemeyer tapped more into the social norms, values and beliefs of the dominant social group, Duckitt, drawing on social identity theory (Tajfel 1982; Tajfel 1979), argues that authoritarianism results

from intra and intergroup dynamics. Duckitt thus conceives authoritarian *aggression* as a general stance toward nonconformity, authoritarian *submission* as a preferential posture toward authority, and *conventionalism* as an internalized preference for conformity to group norms and rules. He argues that Altemeyer's RWA work fails to explain what "pulls the three components together into a single unitary and coherent dimension" (70). To Duckitt it seems clear that the "force" that unites the three facets is the "individual's emotional identification with a giving social group" (70) because stronger group attachments increase the levels of group commitment and group cohesion. Put differently, the greater an individual's group identification, the greater his/her conformity to in-group norms, values and beliefs, which in turn establishes the potential for the authoritarian reactivity.

Much of his conceptual framework builds on classic work that demonstrates that group cohesion can lead to greater in-group conformity (Schacter 1951), that group salience tends to increase conformity (Brehm and Festinger 1957), that salience levels condition the "readiness" of an individual to aggress against deviants (Emerson 1954), and research that shows that intergroup competition and/or perception of threats may lead to the acceptance of more centralized leadership structures (Rabbie and Bekkers 1978). Moreover, Duckitt draws on classic social-psychological work that illustrates that intergroup competition can condition in-group solidarity and cohesion (Sherif and Sherif 1953), that social dynamics shape in-group conformity (Lauderdale 1976), that groups tend to crack down on normative deviance (Rabbie and Bekkers 1978) as well as the fact that higher group cohesiveness leads to differential biases toward the in-group and out-

groups (Dion 1973). In short, Duckitt (1989) argues that “authoritarianism is simply the individual or group’s conception of the relationship which should exist, that is, the appropriate or normative relationship, between the group and its individual members” (73). Viewing belief systems as a continuum from “authoritarianism” to “libertarianism”, Duckitt conceives authoritarianism as a phenomenon tied to belief structures that subordinates the personal need for autonomy to the group’s need for social cohesion. He thus maintains that “normative beliefs” and not “attitudes or values” matter.

Duckitt also asserts that models of authoritarianism should become more “situationally-reactive” by which he means that they should include the group context in which authoritarian phenomena emerge. While highlighting the central role of insecurity and threats to the collective identity and acknowledging conceptual links between conformity, expressions of intolerance and underlying “affective intensit[ies]”, he maintains that group identification and social cohesiveness is necessary but not sufficient to create authoritarianism proper. Drawing on Tajfel’s (1979a) work on secure versus insecure social identities, he speculates that secure social identities (which are based on stable status intergroup differences) should develop a more “relaxed, tolerant and liberal orientation to both in-group and out-group” (77). Although this statement indirectly hints that Duckitt already conceded contributions of individual factors in his original work, his overall framework still tended to focus primarily on group dynamics.

While this conceptual shift toward group processes and normative threats offers an interesting new vantage point, it fails to adequately address a number of crucial issues (more on this later). As Kreindler (2005) has pointed out, Duckitt’s causal

explanations are not only “speculative” but are also unable to explain how group cohesiveness processes mediate group cohesion. Kreindler also critiqued the GCM by arguing that the model “runs the risk” of failing to distinguish “between the origins of authoritarianism, the predispositions per se, and its products” (141). While she agrees with his general ideas on intergroup relations and his views that external threat increases social cohesion, she doubts that intragroup deviance operates the same way. Following social categorization theory (Turner 1987) she argues that intergroup threat actually reduces intragroup differences and thus creates more leniency toward in-group deviants. She also maintains that the model cannot explain how in-group cohesion and in-group deviance relate and how sources of intergroup threat translate into forms of aggression. In short, by removing the nature of ideology and social structural arrangements from his original framework Duckitt risks demoting the concept of authoritarianism to situational conformity and, thus, undermines its theoretical potency.

Duckitt’s Dual-Process Motivational Model (DPMM)

In his later work, Duckitt (2001) proposes a theoretical model in which expressions of intolerance are the result of two “motivational goals”: on the one hand a “competitively driven dominance-power-superiority motivation” (as measured by SDO), on the other a “threat-driven social control and group defense motivation” (as captured by RWA). Situational characteristics such as “social and intergroup threat” or “inequalities in or competition over power and dominance” can trigger these two motivational goals and lead to forms of intolerance. Unlike his earlier GCM (Duckitt

1989), however, Duckitt puts more purchase on individual-level differences in the DPMM. Combining insights of social worldviews (core beliefs that view the world as dangerous and threatening and/or as a competitive jungle) and “personalities” (preference for social conformity versus tough-mindedness), he proposes a duo of forces that is said to shape ideological attitudes. In short, the DPMM sees intolerance and intergroup attitudes emerging “from powerful and basic human motivational goals”; in other words, “intrapsychic ... force[s] that [are] ... cognitively activated, or made salient, by individuals’ and groups’ perceptions and understandings of their social and intergroup situations” (105-106).

Preliminary empirical support for this model comes from a comparative study of American and White Afrikaner students. Departing from the assumption that RWA and SDO reflect ideological expressions of motivational goals that are mediated by particular social worldviews, the authors applied structural equation modeling to show that individuals perceive the world as threatening and dangerous desire social conformity (RWA), while individuals who see it in a competitive light tend to embrace more a dominance and power orientation (SDO). Hence, the model purports to show how worldviews can be an outcome of both personality and situational factors (Duckitt, Wagner, du Plessis, and Birum 2002). Other partial support for the DPMM comes from a recent experiment that manipulated the status and perception of out-groups. The authors found that RWA represents an index of “motivational concerns” about social cohesion, stability and security that can translate into prejudice against out-groups – especially when they come from lower statuses and are perceived as threatening. In

contrast, SDO, which is seen as reflecting an index of perceived in-group superiority and dominance, had little effect on out-groups that were seen as status competitors (Cohrs and Asbrock 2009). This work raises important questions about “worldviews” (or certain beliefs) and how they affect different dimensions of the authoritarian specter.

Some authors, however, have taken issue with this cognitive-motivational model. Kreindler (2005), for example, argues that Duckitt needs to “clarify” what he means by “worldview” and “traits”, rhetorically asking as to whether ideology is “linked to an entire worldview, or just to the part that concerns group relations?” (2). She also points out that Duckitt’s model cannot explain what causes group relations to be “perceived as frightening by one person and competitive by another” (94). Despite these concerns, the theoretical and empirical support seems to back the idea that RWA and SDO relate to different forms of prejudice. By blending situational factors (nature of in-group-intergroup relations, threat levels) and personality factors (values, human needs), Duckitt offers a more integrated framework. Since he primarily focuses on motivational goals and individual values, however, his formulation continues to have difficulties in accounting for more macro-structural and/or ideational factors.

Kreindler’s Dual-Group-Process Model (DGPM)

Kreindler (2003; 2005), like Duckitt (1989), takes an issue with the tendency to view prejudice (and thus authoritarianism) exclusively in terms of individual traits. Rejecting psychodynamic, social learning, group cohesion as well as motivational-cognitive approaches, and strongly building on social identity theory (Tajfel 1982; Tajfel 1979; Turner and Brown 1978), she argues that “most forms of authoritarian hostility”

(96) are threat-mediated manifestations of intragroup processes. She thus sees SDO as a reflection of “category differentiation, which involves the evaluation of individuals on the basis of their category membership”, and RWA as a reflection of “normative differentiation, which involves the evaluation of in-group members on the basis of their prototypicality” (90). This cognitive engine – in turn – leads to an in-group identification that bestows a positive social identity and thus leads to feelings of group superiority and adoption of hierarchical intergroup beliefs. For her, salient group identification thus often forces members to evaluate the legitimacy of intergroup relations. If these are seen as illegitimate, members will either disaffiliate from the group or rationalize their membership. Drawing on experimental evidence, she asserts that high group salience tends to entice individuals to rationalize membership while low salience tends to either lead to disaffiliation (Jetten, Spears, and Manstead 1997) or re-categorization of the group status. In other words, for her there are two “two routes” to prejudice: SDO reflecting a form of intergroup derogation that focuses on not wanting other groups to have any privileges, and RWA reflecting intergroup derogation due to perceived normative deviance.

In the attempt to advance her DGPM, she criticizes traditional conceptualizations of authoritarianism (Altemeyer 1981; Altemeyer 1988). While conceding that authoritarians “endorse obedience as a virtue” (91) she alleges that authoritarian submission is not a “stable attribute” but a contextual phenomenon. Citing studies of highly deviant authoritarian groups that oppose “authorities”, she argues that if submission were contingent upon the nature of authority it can constitute a personality

dimension. Seemingly dismissing the possibility that submission could serve a functional role – like Fromm (1936; 1941) or Allport (1954) had argued – she follows Rokeach and Restle (1960) in seeing authoritarianism as an outcome of belief congruency. Tying authoritarian submission to the legitimacy of the authority, she thinks that submission essentially reflects an “ideology about the appropriate role of authority”, thus, becoming “theoretically subordinate to [authoritarian aggression and conventionalism]” (91). She also stresses that since authoritarians have a higher susceptibility to threat, they act “perfectly rational” when they endorse strong leadership or when they aggress against those who undermine social stability. Hence, for her, the observed rigidity constitutes nothing but a “logical outgrowth of ... [the individual’s] fear for social disorder” (93).

While not central to her model, she acknowledges that group affiliation and group membership processes are influenced both by agency (individuals choose groups that suit their values) and structure (individuals internalize and conform to group norms). Since membership salience mediates conformity – an argument that others also have advanced (e.g. Jetten, Postmes, and McAuliffe 2002) – she contends that salient identification translates into “conventionalism” (e.g. adherence to in-group norms). This fine distinction is especially interesting because submission to norms – as Fromm (1941) would argue – does not necessarily reflect a qualitatively different phenomenon from submission to authority. Furthermore, she stresses that in-group deviance is often seen as much more threatening by high identifiers – especially when it is perceived to be in the direction of out-group prototypicality. Building on research of other social identity

theorists, she argues that pro-norm deviants are often much more tolerated (Abrams, Marques, Bown, and Henson 2000) and that salience increases the motivation to defend the group's image (Coull, Yzerbyt, Castano, Paladino, and Leemans 2001). Hence, she claims that high identifiers don't value "unity in the abstract" but "adherence to social norms" that are "contextually significant to ... their social self-contextualization" (98). Conceptualized this way, authoritarian aggression reflects a normative erosion of the *relevant* "social order" and thus mainly an "intragroup rather than an intergroup phenomenon" (99).

The new DRGM also strongly rejects the notion that authoritarianism is only a "right-wing" phenomenon. Kreindler contends that there is "no evidence" that "socialist authoritarians" are any less authoritarian than "capitalist authoritarians". While this conflates issues of group affiliation with issues of ideological commitment (also see Fromm 1929/1984; Fromm 1936; Rokeach and Restle 1960; Stone and Smith 1993), her model – like Stenner's (2005) work – does succeed in differentiating ideological orientations from authoritarianism proper. By tying authoritarian submission to group-driven identity dynamics and self-categorization processes, the DGPM offers an interesting way to explain submissive tendencies and attitudes toward authorities. Viewing authoritarian submission as a "byproduct" of "attitudes to deviants" and thus as a "direct product of group identification" (100), she effectively links the nature of authority to the "embodiment of group values". The DRGM – in some ways similar to Duckitt (1989, 2001) – thus postulates that threats against the in-group will lead to "normative differentiation". These threats seem particularly potent when the group

membership status is experienced as insecure. For Kreindler, identity threats lead to “a compensatory reliance on social identity” – a shift that helps the individual to regain a sense of security and self-esteem.

By firmly situating prejudice within the logic of group processes, the DGPM couches authoritarian tendencies into a person’s unique relationship with the group structure. While the model does not deny that personal characteristics and experiences affect ideology “by promoting specific group-related perceptions or identification with particular groups. ... [it] maintains that neither ideologies nor the proximal influences on ideologies should be mistaken for traits.” (Kreindler 2005:104). While the model provides a number of useful insights it again suffers from the tendency to reduce complex phenomena into fairly simple processes (e.g. normative and categorical differentiation). Like Duckitt (1989, 2001), she also fails to adequately explain how salience is created and why different individuals deal differently with threats. Her explicit suggestion that any positive social identity quasi-automatically leads to a feeling of in-group superiority (and thus a hierarchical view of intergroup relations) seems especially troubling because it downplays the importance of structurally and ideologically-primed phenomena. Hence, her rendition of authoritarian phenomena – like those of others – still risks demoting authoritarianism to simple salience-mediated situational conformity.

Feldman and Stenner's Interactional Models (IM)

Feldman's Interactionist Model (FIM)

Feldman (2003) offers a “new” model that views authoritarian predispositions as originating “in the conflict between the values for social conformity and personal autonomy”. He argues that authoritarian expressions such as prejudice and intolerance are more common among those who “value social conformity and perceive a threat to social cohesion”. Viewing authoritarianism as an individual’s “orientation toward society” (46), he argues the “tension between autonomy and social control” shapes the degree to which individuals will “desire ... social restrictions on behavior” (46). Feldman stresses that autonomy and social conformity are “central social values” and as such constitute a “universal aspect of living” (47). He sees child-rearing values in this respect as especially enlightening because they highlight the “the relative weights that people give to these two values when they are forced to confront the trade-off between them” (48). Like earlier theorists (Adorno, Frenkel-Brunswik, Levinson, and Sanford 1950; Fromm 1941; Tomkins 1963b), he asserts that this preference for social conformity is rooted in a more negative Hobbesian view of human nature. While such “negative” worldviews tend to translate into “strong support” for authority structures, more positive Rousseauian belief systems lead to an aversion of blind adherence to social norms and thus to a stronger ambivalence toward any constraints placed on behavior.

Central to this “new” conceptualization – like in all other contemporary models – is the role of threat. Feldman argues that “any action that may challenge conformity – either by advocating non-conformity or simply being non-conformist - could be seen as

a threat [to those that value social conformity]" (50). In the absence of threat, "authoritarians" thus should exhibit no or much lower levels of intolerance and prejudice. In other words, for Feldman, social conformity is a "predisposition" and intolerance a product of threat. Acknowledging that other factors may come into play, he asserts that the "interaction between social conformity-autonomy and perceived threat ... is sufficient to explain the combination of the authoritarian aggression and authoritarian submission" (52). While his interactionist approach eliminates "conservatism" as a distinct component, it still leaves enough room for affinities to particular ideological orientations. Rejecting simple personality-based explanations, he defines submission as "a result of the desire of those who value social conformity" and aggression as the "hostility directed toward those who are seen to threaten the social order" (67).

Using a sample of undergraduates Feldman tries to operationalize the new model by creating a new scale for social-conformity versus autonomy, and investigates how the new construct relates to different authoritarian and ideological constructs. His Social Conformity-Autonomy Beliefs Scale (SCAB Scale) uses seven facets that retain the basic components of the authoritarianism concept (trade-off between social conformity versus autonomy, preference for personal freedom versus social order, commitment for social norms and values, normative influence on social cohesion and socialization and child rearing values). Arguing that Schwartz and Zanna's (1992) "direction and stimulation" values resemble his "autonomy" values and the "conformity and tradition" values his "social conformity" values, Feldman developed a second measure for social

conformity-autonomy (Social Conformity Values Scale - SCAV Scale). For validity and reliability issues, however, he decided to combine the two scales into one ... though this conceptual move – without the backing of an overarching theoretical narrative – seems somewhat arbitrary.

In sum, his interactionist model combines personal predispositions and situational contingencies and includes many of the key components found in other models. What makes this model different, however, is his emphasis on the role of values or value orientations in shaping expressions of intolerance (a classic authoritarian phenomenon). His stronger emphasis on values and his concession that personality traits such as openness to experience can affect the development of a social conformity orientation renews the classic notion of values as mediating processes in in-group and out-group processes. It also demonstrates that personal and collective value-belief systems interact with both ideologies and personality traits and thus provides a conceptual opening for stronger theory integration. However, Feldman's view still remains overly agency-driven and thus fails to offer conceptual inroads into possible structural-ideational affinities.

Stenner's Interactionist Model (SIM)

Feldman's student, Karen Stenner (1997; 2005), builds on the work of her mentor, as well as Duckitt's insights, but advances a more integrative conceptual framework. Like earlier theorists (Adorno et al 1950, Allport 1954) she argues that "[i]ndividuals possess fairly stable predispositions to intolerance of difference, that is, varying levels of willingness to 'put up with' differing people, ideas, and behaviors" (2).

Trying to overcome the conceptual fuzziness and the reductionist undertones in the research tradition, she more strongly distinguishes among the causes, essential elements and consequences of authoritarianism. She proposes an integrative model of the “authoritarian dynamic” in which she blends authoritarian predispositions and conditions of threat. She ties authoritarianism to an us-versus-them logic which – in turn – creates an emergent “demand for absolute obedience to the rules and rulers of *some* normative order” (5). In doing so, she offers one of the most comprehensive and systematic (and eloquent one might add) reconceptualization attempts in recent years.

Following Duckett (1989, 2003), she contends that “authoritarianism is an individual predisposition concerned with the appropriate balance between group authority and uniformity, on the one hand, and individual autonomy and diversity, on the other” (14). For her, authoritarianism is a predisposition⁶⁰ that plots along a continuum from extreme authoritarianism (“preference for uniformity and insistence upon group authority”) to extreme libertarianism (“preference for difference and insistence upon individual autonomy”) (15). While she wants to remain agnostic as to how individuals actually develop authoritarian predispositions, she speculates that there are different routes including genetics, personality traits and social learning. Her model also pushes for a stronger conceptual separation between authoritarian predispositions, attitudes and behaviors, authoritarianism proper and authoritarian manifestations. She maintains that authoritarian dispositions lead to preferences for certain structural and

⁶⁰ Arguing that a “good” measure of authoritarianism should tap into the “fundamental orientation to authority and uniformity versus autonomy and difference”, she develops her own measure from a battery of childrearing values (with a rather low scale reliability one should add).

ideational arrangements – those that “enhance sameness and minimize diversity of people, beliefs, and behaviors” (16). In other words, authoritarianism is a

“personal distaste for difference ... [that] becomes a normative ‘worldview’ about the social value of obedience and conformity (or freedom and difference), the prudent and just balance between group authority and individual autonomy ..., and the appropriate uses of (or limits on) that authority.” (Stenner 2005:17)

To further support her arguments she points to similarities between her “individual orientations” and Schwarz and Boehnke’s (2004) or Rokeach’s (1973) work on human values.

Stenner’s model also asserts that authoritarianism is best understood when the “elements of the predisposition” are seen as a situational-primed defense mechanism. Since authoritarians are “sociotropic boundary maintainers, norm enforcers, and cheerleaders for authority ... [they] are oriented to collective rather than individual conditions, concerned more with the fate of the normative order than with their personal fortunes” (32). Following her mentor, she argues that under reassuring social conditions, “authoritarians” blend in just fine. Predispositions only get activated in situations in which individuals perceive (1) a failure of group authority, (2) nonconformity to or problem with existing norms or (3) a state of in-group deviance. Thus, only normative threats – or threats to shared norms (e.g. anomie, states of uncertainty, insecurity, meaninglessness, normlessness or erosion of social cohesion) – will set off in-group conformity and out-group aggression. Hence, like other others

(Allport 1954; Fromm 1941; Oesterreich 2000; Oesterreich 2005), Stenner conceives intolerance as a regulatory mechanism that helps maintain a positive self identity.

Another major contribution of Stenner's (2005) work is that she helps to further empirically untangle ideological orientations (e.g. conservatism) from authoritarianism proper. While she sees political conservatism⁶¹ and authoritarianism as a mutually reinforcing duet – “presumably by virtue of sharing some aversion to novelty, unfamiliarity, and uncertainty” (173) – she contends that their “love affair” can cover the entire gamut from negative to positive correlations. Both phenomena are “eternally wed, or can be divorced and lined up with different partners; if the latter, then politics can provide critical outside meddling that drives one character into the arms of another” (149). In other words, conservatism and authoritarianism differ in the nature of their primary concerns: while status quo conservatives want to “promote stability and certainty over change and uncertainty”, authoritarians push for “oneness and sameness”. They both may “share a general distaste for difference” (149), but conservatives are more ambivalent toward differences over time and change while “authoritarians” tend to be more sensitive to differences in people and beliefs.

A logical consequence of her “authoritarian dynamic” is that it helps to re-conceptualize politics from a “‘top-down’ diffusion of cues and considerations ... [to] a ‘bottom-up’ expression of primitive passions ... [from a] politics of ideas ... [into] a politics of fear” (324). In doing so, she – of course – echoes earlier theoretical contributions that tie authoritarianism to the emotional realities of the individual

⁶¹ For Stenner this means an “amalgam” of status quo and laissez-faire conservatism.

(Fromm 1941; Oesterreich 2005; Tomkins 1995; Tomkins 1963b; Tomkins 1987). Despite her semi-determinist view of authoritarian predispositions, her systematic treatment of causes, dimensions and expressions of authoritarianism offers a range of useful insights. Her conclusions – in particular – offer highly provocative thoughts as to the potential implications of authoritarian processes. She argues, for example, that the U.S. could need a dose of *less* democracy because its adversarial political system essentially primes the “authoritarian dynamic”. Rather than promoting a multicultural education that focuses on differences (and thus puts individuals with authoritarian predispositions on the defense), she advocates a quasi-Durkheimian solution by arguing that societies need “more common and unifying rituals, institutions, and processes” (333). While her suggestions for a new collective conscience are speculative, she touches on an important issue: the dire need for more research on how structural phenomena impact authoritarian phenomena.

Stellmacher and Petzel’s Interactionist Group Authoritarian Model

Arguing that the proper role of predispositions has not been addressed, Stellmacher and Petzel (2005) develop a new interactionist “group authoritarian model” (Stellmacher and Petzel 2005; Stellmacher 2004). Following Duckitt (2001), the authors define group authoritarianism as the “belief in the appropriate relationship that should exist between groups and their individual members” (245). Like Stenner (2005), they conceive authoritarian predispositions as being activated by particular social contexts. While threat constitutes a central component in the new IGAM, the authors argue, however, that threat alone does not create authoritarianism. They stress that the nature

and the timing of threat are equally important. Merging dispositional and situational contingencies, the authors successfully show that authoritarian reactions emerge in an interactive tango.

To substantiate their conceptual ideas, the authors conducted three empirical studies in which they employed an innovative mix of surveys, scenarios and experiments. The findings from these studies indicate that the strength of authoritarian “beliefs” depend – to a large degree – on the specifics of the group as well as the educational levels of the individuals. While “stronger authoritarian predispositions lead to higher group authoritarianism ... no main effect for threat or identification” (260-261) could be discovered. This suggested to the authors that authoritarian beliefs were expressed only if:

“the identification with the group was high if, at the same time, the identity with that particular group was threatened ... [However,] perceptions of threat alone do not automatically lead to an authoritarian reaction ... only those persons who possess authoritarian dispositions will show an authoritarian reaction in threatening situations” (Stellmacher and Petzel 2005: 262)

They thus concluded that group authoritarianism can be conceptually separated from mere in-group identification.

While questions about the validity of these studies remain, the authors managed to show that individual dispositions cannot be eliminated from explanatory models. The insights also further demonstrated that group salience and threat are necessary but not sufficient explanatory variables. Highly identified individuals with low authoritarian predispositions, for example, seem much less likely to respond to threat and exhibit

expressions of group authoritarianism. In short, the research resuscitated insights from older work that suggested that both structural and individual variables are involved in authoritarian phenomena (e.g. Elms and Milgram 1966).

Jost's Work on Motivated Social Cognition and Ideological Systems

Probably the most ambitious and systematic attempts of theory integration and theory innovation to date comes from John T. Jost and his collaborators (Doty, Peterson, Winter, Jost, and Sidanius 2004; Jost 2009; Jost, Federico, and Napier 2009; Jost, Glaser, Kruglanski, and Sulloway 2003; Jost 1995; Jost, Kay, and Thorisdottir 2009). These authors have cast a wide net around existing ideas within political psychology, authoritarianism research, social psychology as well as sociology to help them advance an ambitious integrative framework. Central to this new conceptual platform are ideas of “motivated social cognition”, situational contingencies, bottom-up and top-down ideological processes as well as psychologically-rooted system-justification processes. To offer an overview of this important work, the following section will sketch out the evolution of some the ideas within this “school of thought”.

Motivated Social Cognition - Early Ideas: This research tradition departs from the assumption that ideologies satisfy a set of social-cognitive motives. It critiques previous conceptual attempts on the grounds that existing theories and measures not only conflate psychological and political dynamics, but that they also neglect “situational factors” that can moderate the “experience and expression” of ideologies. To overcome these perceived theoretical shortcomings, the authors integrated insights from theories

of personality and individual differences, theories of epistemic and existential needs as well as sociopolitical theories of ideology as forms of individual and collective rationalizations. In their earlier formulations, these conceptual attempts blended “epistemic motives” (e.g. constructs such as dogmatism, intolerance of ambiguity, cognitive complexity, closed-mindedness, avoidance of uncertainty as well as needs for order, structure, and closure which – for the authors – constitute coping mechanisms that help the individual deal with uncertainty and the fear of the unknown), “existential motives” (e.g. constructs such as self-esteem, terror management, fear, threat, anger as well as pessimism which constitute psychological means to address change, threats to self and feelings of “worthlessness”), and “ideological motives” (e.g. constructs such as self-interest, group dominance, and system justification which provide systems of individual or collective rationalization) to create one overarching conceptual framework. Based on a meta-analysis of longitudinal survey data, the authors argue that this motive structure can help better explain how individuals cope with uncertainty and fear (Jost, Glaser, Kruglanski, and Sulloway 2003).

To advance the new theoretical account, the authors propose an intricate “matching process” between needs, motives and ideological belief systems (one that is modulated by various informational processes). Echoing Tomkins (1995), the authors, however, acknowledge that this process does not constitute a one-on-one phenomenon. Embedded into a system justification rationale⁶², Jost et al. (2003) suggest

⁶² System justification theory (SJT) blends insights from political (e.g. just world theory), psychological (e.g. cognitive dissonance) and sociological theory (e.g. Feminist and Marxist views of dominant ideology) to explain why individuals and groups accept conservative ideas and are “motivated to perceive existing

that people from different social classes are drawn to conservative ideologies for different reasons. While people from lower social classes adopt them to reduce “fear, anxiety, dissonance, uncertainty, or instability”, individuals from higher social strata embrace them for reasons of “self interest”. Using information from five national surveys, the authors also suggest that individuals from more disadvantaged groups⁶³ tend to be more willing to censor public critiques of government actions, have more trust in government officials, believe in the necessity of income inequalities, endorse “meritocratic belief systems” and stand behind economic inequality. Echoing earlier work on working class authoritarianism (see, for example, Fromm 1929/1984; Stone, Lederer, and Christie 1993), they thus remark that individuals “who suffer the most from a given state of affairs are paradoxically the least likely to question, challenge, reject, or change it” (Jost, Pelham, Sheldon, and Sullivan 2003: 13). This often means that disenfranchised social actors participate in and help perpetuate negative stereotypes of themselves – a phenomenon that some have likened to notions of “false consciousness” (Jost and Banaji 1994). Taken together, these findings clearly indicate that the attractive forces that propel individuals into conservative value-belief systems are better understood via self-management and self-maintenance processes.

One way of understanding conservatism (or related constructs) is to view it as a form of “special motivated cognition”. Since individuals are “highly motivated to perceive the world in ways that satisfies their needs, values, and prior epistemic

social arrangements as fair, legitimate, justifiable, and rational, and perhaps even natural and inevitable” (Jost et al. 2003)

⁶³ Jost and collaborators acknowledge variations along racial, social and geographic variables.

commitments” (Jost et al. 2003:341), motivated social cognition provides an interesting conceptual tool to understand ideological commitment. Understanding ideational systems, however, is not easy and necessitates a clear conceptual separation between the “stable definitional core” and “a set of more malleable historically changing peripheral associations”⁶⁴. For political conservatism, the stable core involves “specific social, cognitive, and motivational needs” that focus on “opposition to change” and “preference for inequality”. More peripheral aspects, in contrast, relate to the “desire for order and stability, preference for gradual rather than revolutionary change (if any), adherence to preexisting social norms, idealization of authority figures, punishment of deviants, and endorsement of social and economic inequality” (343). Building on Diamond (1995) and Habermas (1989), Jost et al. (2003) also argue that since conservatism “often takes the form of a social movement” it may be better conceived as a “social norm” or “situational reaction” that emerges in particular sociohistorical contexts. While this seems to explain the more dynamic aspects of social systems, it largely ignores more stable structural processes that sustain ideational systems.

Ideological Systems and the Concept of Elective Affinities: Jost’s later collaborative work seems primarily concerned with the development of a meta-narrative. The research especially tries to refine the construct of “motivated social cognition”, aims to link it more strongly to system justification theory as well as generate empirical

⁶⁴ The theoretical arguments seem to constitute – at least implicitly – a conceptual spin-off of Rokeach’s work on the structure of value-belief systems.

evidence for the psychosocial realities that emerge with the adherence to political systems.

Expounding the current theoretical psychological hard-line, Jost et al. (2009) conceive “ideology” as a set of schemas that represent “learned knowledge structures” and consist of “interrelated network of beliefs, opinions and values”. They suggest that “ideological divides are, among other things, personality divides” that “reflect and reinforce social and personal preferences, styles, and activities” (323). While mainly advancing cognitive and rationalistic accounts for the adoption of ideologies, the view also acknowledges that individuals “may behave in ideologically meaningful ways (or be affected by their own ideological proclivities) without necessarily being consciously or fully aware of the role of ideology in their lives” (325). The revised model thus postulates that ideological orientations reflect an interactive outcome of “top-down socialization processes” and “bottom-up psychological predispositions”. While retaining existential and epistemic motives within the explanatory narrative, the new framework introduces relational motives as a new category and reframes ideological motives into a more ambiguous construct called system justification “motivation”. For the authors, relational motives constitute “the desire to affiliate and establish interpersonal relationships, a need for person or social identification, solidarity with others, and shared reality” (309) while system justification represents a “motivation to defend, bolster, and justify the status quo; tendency to view current social arrangements as fair, legitimate, and desirable” (309).

To theoretically tackle the phenomenon of “mutual attraction” between belief systems, personal idiosyncrasies and collective needs and motives, the authors – like the neural network behind this dissertation⁶⁵ – recruit Weber’s concept of elective affinities. While putting disproportionate emphasis on individual and ideational factors, the model accedes that affinities can flow from group identification processes, perceptions of collective self-interest and/or “realistic” group interests. Amalgaming Weber’s metaphor with Marx’s terminology, the model links ideological phenomena and individual expressions within a substructure-superstructure framework. Jost et al. (2009) put their conceptual moves this way:

“[I]deology can be thought of as having both a discursive (socially constructed) superstructure and a functional (or motivational) substructure. The discursive superstructure refers to the network of socially constructed attitudes, values, and beliefs bound up with a particular ideological position at a particular time and place Defined in this way, the discursive superstructure can be thought of as a “social representation” ... that guides political judgment in a top-down schematic fashion and is typically transmitted from political elites to the public at large The functional substructure refers to the ensemble of social and psychological needs, goals, and motives that drive the political interests of ordinary citizens in a bottom-up fashion and are served by the discursive contents of ideology” (315)

While not necessarily providing new insights, the model does excel in bringing multiple processes into a more cohesive framework.

In addition to the work on motivated social cognition, systems justification processes and general ideological systems, Jost and his collaborators also have further illuminated the nature and consequences of conservative ideologies (especially with

⁶⁵ The conceptual application of Weber’s ideas here is a curious example of intellectual co-evolution; the author of this dissertation had already formulated his intellectual coup d’état when he came across Jost’s work.

respect to individual variables). Building on earlier work (e.g. Rokeach 1979; Stenner 2005; Tomkins 1963b), they argue that essentially two “core aspects” shape the political left-right continuum: “attitudes” concerning “change versus stability” and “equality versus inequality”. Underscoring the multidimensionality of the construct also helps explain why SDO scores tend to predict economic conservatism better or why RWA scores seem to correlate more highly with measures of social conservatism (Jost 2009). Other recent work also has highlighted that uncertainty avoidance and threat management not only characterize forms of ideological extremism but also underlie more moderate conservative leanings. The associations, however, are not necessarily direct, but are partially mediated by “attitudes” toward resistance to change or opposition to equality (Jost et al. 2007). Another echo from the past can be seen in recent work that suggests that conservative ideologies can serve “a palliative function”. Drawing on U.S. and international data Napier and Jost (2008b), for example, have shown that individuals with right-wing value-belief systems seem to exhibit much greater levels of subjective well-being. Since the “happiness gap” between liberals and conservatives has been widening over the past 30 years, the authors speculate that latter possess a stronger “ideological buffer against the negative hedonic effects of economic inequality” (565).

Finally, in an attempt to characterize the interactive nature between authoritarianism, social class and conservative phenomena, Napier and Jost (2008a) embarked on a cross-national study of 19 democratic countries. Operationalizing working-class authoritarianism via four “psychological aspects” (conventionalism, moral

absolutism, obedience to authority, and cynicism⁶⁶), the authors found that – while generally being related to forms of moral and ethnic intolerance – obedience to authority and cynicism seem to be substantially more common among lower socio-economic groups. Interestingly, only conventionalism and moral absolutism seem to be the significant predictors of economic conservatism.

Some Concluding Thoughts: In sum, models of motivated social cognition – especially in their more recent incarnations – offer novel, very systematic and highly integrative interactionist frameworks – theoretical syntheses in which bottom-up and top-down processes create affinities between individual and ideational factors. The framework, however, overemphasizes individual predispositions and underconceptualizes structural dynamics (also see Kreindler 2005). The work also suffers from conceptual ambiguity; it seems unclear, for example, how “motives” are conceptually different from motivations, needs, goals, and desires or in what ways beliefs, values, opinions and attitudes differ. Likewise, while the authors go to lengths in trying to acknowledge affective and unconscious forces, the overly rationalistic and cognitive framing of their models often undermines their intentions. While clearly going beyond the reductionist nature of existing frameworks, the models still remain fairly a-structural and fail to provide a mechanism for the found affinities. Despite these shortcomings, however, the tradition has helped to reshape the intellectual canyons in which scholars of authoritarianism (or related ideological phenomena) perambulate. By pushing theory integration beyond the

⁶⁶ The two aspects “moral absolutism” and “cynicism” are curious operationalization choices (the latter more so than the former). While both have been associated with authoritarian dynamics they do not capture the core of the phenomenon.

“normal” comfort levels of academia, it has set an important precedent for the theoretical utility of such approaches.

Oesterreich’s Authoritarian Reaction Model (ARM)

Detlef Oesterreich’s work builds on a much more classic notion of authoritarianism as a personality pattern that is reflective of social-structural conditions (Adorno, Frenkel-Brunswik, Levinson, and Sanford 1950; Fromm 1936; Oesterreich 1974; Oesterreich 1996). Trying to provide a theoretical rationale for the emergence of dispositional authoritarianism while leaving room for situational, structural and ideological contingencies, he develops a new model of the “authoritarian reaction”⁶⁷. Like Fromm (1936, 1941), he argues that to “understand authoritarianism means less to understand how authoritarian individuals develop, but rather how in the course of the developmental process an orientation to authority can be given up” (Oesterreich 2005: 294). Mirroring Fromm’s insights, as well as more recent advances in attachment theory (see for example Baumeister and Leary 1995; Manuel 2006), Oesterreich argues that early child-caregiver bonds are adaptive because they provide the child with a secure environment. However, as the child grows up it needs to learn to break free and develop new coping mechanisms to deal with life’s uncertainties.

Individuals unable to develop these skills may retain authoritarian predispositions into adulthood and thus rely on strong authorities, adopt moralistic value-belief systems and affiliate with specific groups. Moderated by social-structural

⁶⁷ His usage of the “authoritarian reaction” is somewhat different from the usage of other scholars (like that of Ben Feldman, for example.)

factors (e.g. social class), individuals will use this “flight into security” as an anxiety and uncertainty reduction mechanism. While this conceptualization seems to constitute a more modern version of Fromm’s classic arguments, Oesterreich contributions help resurrect an old piece of the puzzle. Oesterreich also asserts that while non-authoritarians can react in authoritarian ways, he maintains that authoritarians are motivated by an “emotional, reactive rather than intentional, rational, decision-making process” (283).

These individual differences also mean that authoritarians develop a “habitualized reactive tendency” that helps them to steer clear from potentially threatening situations. Since these primary dispositions are accompanied by the development of secondary personality characteristics (via socialization), authoritarians often reject the new and unfamiliar, adhere to traditional norms and value systems, and respond anxiously and inflexibly to new situations. Rather than seeing aggression as a primary disposition, however, Oesterreich sees it as secondary characteristics – an incomplete protective shell. He maintains that authoritarians often have very poor conflict resolution skills and tend to live in a state of “emotional and cognitive overload” that not only makes them more receptive to threats but also lowers their threshold for aggression and hostility. Like Fromm (1936), Allport (1954) and other more contemporary theorists (Stenner 2005), he also stresses that authoritarian aggression is not so much an active phenomenon but represents a “defensive stance”. Since novel and unfamiliar situations induce uncertainty and insecurity, authoritarians escape into submission and conformity to squelch their experiential angst.

Oesterreich's authoritarian reaction model succeeds in linking personality traits, value-belief internalization processes, group salience, relations to authority with more historically-contingent socialization dynamics. As a student of Kant and Fromm's work, Oesterreich makes a strong appeal to the research community to return the concept of authoritarianism to its original meaning. He argues that by focusing exclusively on psychological, situational or group-related phenomena, theories will continue to be unable to explain why, for example, individuals subordinate themselves voluntarily to groups, authorities or ideologies rather than embrace a state of enlightenment (Oesterreich 1974; Oesterreich 2001). It doesn't take much to realize that – with Oesterreich – theory has come full circle and returned to the ideas of the founding fathers.

Authoritarianism Research: The New Kids on the Block?

In addition to these efforts, recent research has begun to make theoretical connections between aspects of the authoritarianism (e.g., certain personality traits, preferences for certain value-belief systems, structural arrangements, threat perceptions) and insights from behavioral genetics, trait psychology and evolutionary biology. Steeped within the general paradigm shift of the “second Darwinian revolution” (Freese 2001; Machalek and Martin 2004), these ideas – by offering biosocial and biopsychological explanations of authoritarian processes – have begun to profoundly reshape the conceptual narratives available to the scholar.

Genetics, Personality Characteristics and Authoritarianism

A small but growing body of literature suggests that authoritarian phenomena reflect – at least partially – influences of heredity, personality traits, and/or early childhood temperaments. Genetic correlates as well as personality traits (which are theorized to be largely genetic) have been linked to a series of social-attitudinal measures, value-belief dynamics as well as other authoritarian processes. In doing so, this line of research has begun to challenge the hegemony of social or social-psychological explanations.

Work on intergenerational authoritarian predispositions (or values and beliefs) tend to stress the importance of socialization processes. Bob Altemeyer's (1988; 1996) work, for example, is often cited for its moderate to high correlations between parental and child RWA scores as well as religious orientations. This, and the temporal stability of RWA scores in longitudinal studies (Altemeyer 1996), suggests to Altemeyer that the intergenerational transfer of values, beliefs and attitude preferences is primarily a social phenomenon. In the same vein, Peterson and Duncan's (1999) widely-cited longitudinal study on intergenerational transmission of political attitudes and child adjustment dynamics suggests that the degree of parent-child similarities in authoritarian tendencies can affect interactional dynamics. The authors assert that the more closely RWA scores match, the more likely will parent and child agree on the importance of certain social events, and – interestingly enough – the easier will it be for the child to adjust to college life. Similar intergenerational patterns have also been found with respect to the transmission of social dominance. For example, in a three-generation

study Chatard and Selimbegovic (2008), for example, studied 93 families and found that a child's SDO level appear to be highest for families where parental and grandparental attitudes are also high, intermediate when parental and grandparental attitudes are more incongruent and lowest when SDO attitudes are low. Unlike previous research, which only provided mixed results for the transmission thesis (see, for example, Katz 2003), this study claims to have demonstrated that parents and grandparents are crucial influence in shaping adolescent SDO orientations⁶⁸. While few would contest the observed intergenerational patterns, some have suggested (e.g. Duckitt 2009; Jost, Federico, and Napier 2009) that these findings may reflect genetic rather than social dynamics.

Insights that most strongly undermine the social explanations of authoritarianism come from large-scale twin studies. These studies have demonstrated fairly high "heritabilities" for authoritarianism or related constructs such as conventionalism, conservatism, traditionalism, social conformity and/or religiosity. Using data from a mixed twin sample (106 MZ⁶⁹ and 62 DZ⁷⁰ adult twins reared apart as well as 916 MZ and 726 DZ adult twins reared together), Waller et al. (1990), for example, offer clues for the possible role of genetic contributions to formation of religious interests, attitudes, and values. Employing a range of measures, the author found that about 50% of the variance ("social attitudes" with respect to religion) can be attributed to genetic factors (also see: Stössel, Kämpfe, and Riemann 2006). Similar

⁶⁸ While these findings raise interesting questions, they may just reflect interactional dynamics arising from value-belief congruities (or incongruities) of the interactants (or settings).

⁶⁹ Monozygotic (MZ) twins – also called identical twins – share about 100% of their genes.

⁷⁰ Dizygotic (DZ) twins – also called fraternal twins – share about 50% of their genes.

findings come from “true” authoritarianism research. Corson (1997), for instance, studied MZ and DZ twins reared apart (data: Minnesota Study of Twins Reared Apart – MISTRA), twins reared together (data: Minnesota Twin Registry - MTR) and their spouses and found that about 50% of the phenotypic variance in RWA scores can be attributed to genetic factors while 35% of the variance stems from contributions of the “unshared environment”. Rejecting the “common” assumption that attitudinal similarities among family members reflect cultural transmission, McCourt et al. (1999) studied 39 MZ and 38 DZ adult twins reared apart and 423 MZ and 434 DZ adult twins reared together in order to separate genetic and social antecedents of “authoritarian attitudes”. Applying the logic of the standard additive model, the authors found that genetic factors accounted for as much as 50% of the phenotypic variance while – at the same time – the unshared environment could explain 35%.

Taken together, these studies profoundly question the significance of social and cultural factors in creating trans-generational authoritarian orientations. Since common life history variables (those used to measure the influence of the shared environment) only correlate with RWA scores for individuals reared by biological relatives and not for adoptees, the authors feel confident that genetic factors explain about 50% of the phenotypic variance, the unshared environment about 35%, and the remaining 15% reflecting a combination of shared environment and/or assortative mating. Support for the potential genetic contributions to social attitude complexes and political orientations also come from studies that look at the biopsychological dynamics of conservatism. Bouchard et al. (2003), for example, studied twins, their spouses, and

their friends and found that conservatism appears to have a “sizable” genetic component ($h^2=0.56$). These findings are not empirical abnormalities but have been validated by other large-scale studies. Comparing twin samples from the United States and Australia, Alford and colleagues (2005) estimated that as much as 40% to 50% of the statistical variability in ideological opinions can be genetic. Given these findings, the authors urge other social scientists to incorporate genetic influences into their models of attitude formation.

Even higher genetic contributions have been documented in a recent study on political attitudes (and behaviors). Analyzing information from the Vernon Adult Twin Inventory (548 adult twins: 385 MZ and 163 DZ twins in Canada and the United States), Bell et al. (2009) found large genetic contributions to social conservatism (79%) and religiosity (66%). These findings seem to suggest that individual propensities toward social conservatism and religiosity should be imputed *exclusively* to the genetic makeup of the individual and – to a much lesser degree – idiopathic socialization events. Slightly lower genetic undercurrents have been calculated for preferences of economic equality. The statistical models here suggest additive genetic effects between 46% (DZ twins) and 67% (MZ twins) – with the remainder of the variance due to influences of the unshared environment. To Bell and collaborators (2009), these findings seem to explain why it is often so difficult to “convert” a “person from a right-wing to a left-wing orientation or vice versa, even after prolonged, reasoned argumentation” (872). Conceding the preliminary nature of their findings, they nevertheless maintain that “political personalities or temperaments have evolved that are analogous to the heritable

personality structures proposed by psychologists” (855). A possible theoretical explanation for this comes from Jost (2006) who speculates that individual gene portfolios form cognitive, motivational, and personality complexes that translate into political predispositions – though others have questioned this (see Alford and Hibbing 2007).

Additional hints for genetic contributions to the formation of value-belief systems also come from longitudinal studies that assess the temporal stability of personality traits as well as studies that document cross-cultural differences in value portfolios. Block and Block (2006), for instance, found that childhood personality characteristics can predict political attitudes two decades later. Using a longitudinal design they observed that individuals who were liberals at the age 23 tended to be much more self-reliant, energetic and resilient as preschool children. Growing up in a fairly under-controlled environment they were also able to form diverse relationships. Their more conservative counterparts, in contrast however, felt much more easily victimized and offended, indecisive, fearful, rigid, and vulnerable as children. Growing up in over-controlled environments, they tended to have more difficulties establishing diverse (secure) relationships. While findings like these provide convincing empirical support for the temporal stability of personality characteristics, they do not necessarily “prove” the genetic mantra – though this is what many trait psychologists seem to imply (see, for example, McCrae and Costa 2003). These types of findings could also be accommodated within existing frameworks (e.g. Baumeister and Leary 1995; Erickson 1956; Fromm 1941; Oesterreich 2005). Rather than reflecting inborn tendencies, these

stable “traits” could simply record the nature of the environment that either provides opportunities for the self (e.g. under-regulated homes that lead to liberal leanings) or that dwarfs it (e.g. over-regulated homes that lead to conservative orientations).

Cross-cultural research adds to the already confusing state of the literature. In an exercise of interdisciplinary collaboration, two theorists, Geert Hofstede (an organizational sociologist) and Robert R. McCrae (a trait psychologist), teamed up to answer an old yet profound question: “do dimensions of culture explain mean levels of [personality] traits” or vice versa. Building on their earlier work on cultural value dimensions (e.g. Hofstede 1980; Hofstede 2001) and the five factor model of personality traits (e.g. McCrae 2002; McCrae, Costa, and Wiggins 1996), the authors collected data on personality traits and cultural value dimensions in 33 countries (Hofstede and McCrae 2004). While Hofstede takes a fairly structural approach in interpreting the data⁷¹, McCrae argues that cross-cultural variations in personality traits are manifestations of local gene pool frequencies. Building on insights of behavioral genetics and evolutionary biology, he maintains that traits are inherently biological: cultures do not shape their levels - only their expressions. Pointing to the temporal stability of personality traits, he also argues that cross-cultural differences in value-belief systems can be explained mainly via two processes: selective migration and reverse causation.

⁷¹ Hofstede mainly argues that “correlations between the two sets of data demonstrate that national levels of personality factor scores are not random but correspond to established and reasonably stable differences in national value systems, held to be expressions of national cultures” (Hofstede and McCrae 2004:70).

McCrae sees the validity of his selective migration thesis, for example, in the fact that power-distant cultures exhibit much lower frequencies of extraversion than do cultures that are low on power distance. Since these cultures impose high normative pressures, more extroverted individuals are likely to move to social environments more in tune with their personality makeup. As a consequence, local gene frequencies should change and with it the relative proportion of certain personality types found in the population. He also suggests – as enshrined in his “reverse causation hypothesis” – that cultural systems reflect the ideational “aggregate” of the “personality traits of its members ... and that value systems and their associated institutions can be seen as social adaptations to the psychological environment that a distribution of personality traits represents” (Hofstede and McCrae 2004: 75-76). From the dataset he marshals up a number of examples that he thinks provide purchase to this theory. Individualism (a value dimension), for example, is positively correlated to extroversion (.64) while power distance (a value dimension) is negatively correlated to extroversion (-.57) and openness to experience (-.39) and positively to conscientiousness (.52). Uncertainty avoidance (a value dimension), in contrast, is negatively correlated to personality traits such as agreeableness (-.55) and positively to neuroticism (.58). At the macro-level, this means that groups composed with higher frequencies of neuroticism and lower levels of agreeableness will over time develop and institutionalize value-belief systems that adopt more rigid sets of rules and “screen out” structural arrangements that would require making new decisions (e.g. in high uncertainty avoidance countries). Likewise, McCrae sees “collectivism” (a value dimension) facilitating social exchanges in groups of

introverted individuals (those disinclined to make new social contacts) while “individualism” allows for freer interactions that “come naturally to groups of extraverts”. McCrae acknowledges that the “idea of innate differences in psychological characteristics among groups is unpalatable to many social scientists ... [but maintains that it remains] a legitimate scientific hypothesis” (Hofstede and McCrae 2004:77).

The now well-entrenched mantra of contemporary psychology, that genetics shapes personality traits and that traits influence attitude-value-belief formation processes, conditions behavioral scripts and creates propensities toward certain ideational and structural arrangements, has a certain elegance. Given the recent methodological advances in behavioral biology and trait psychology, such as the ability to measure traits from multiple viewpoints, the use of large sample sizes, and the analysis of data via sophisticated multivariate techniques (Bouchard and Loehlin 2001), intergenerational consistencies in values, beliefs and/or authoritarian predispositions as well as the persistence of genetic explanations in large-scale twin studies, it seems obvious that genetic dynamics (as well as their trait manifestations) should not be dismissed on “ideological” grounds (see, for example, Kagan 2009). That being said, there are a number of conceptual and methodological problems that future researchers need to address before the engrained skepticism of social scientists can be appeased. The empirical evidence as it stands now, however, neither provides conclusive support for the thesis that personality traits are stable over time nor that genetics locks individuals into pre-patterned ideational and/or structural tracks ... even if it insinuates such a possibility.

There are alternative explanations involving structurally-conditioned, niche-seeking processes that could also account for the observed patterns. While the findings suggest that individuals are born with certain affective-cognitive realities that predispose them toward structural and ideational niches that harmonize with their inner experiences, the data say very little about the social and biological plasticity of such dynamics. Temporal stability of traits may simply reflect an environment's structural conduciveness to niche-seeking processes. Social environments that are more permeable to structural mobility (like those in democratic countries where most of this research originates) may simply provide individuals with more opportunities to stay in (and/or move to) environments that cater to their "archetypical" personality needs. Likewise, current accounts of trait personality (and evolutionary dynamics) also often seem to downplay reciprocal and transactional processes (see, for example, Siegler, DeLoache, and Eisenberg 2005) or possible epigenetic phenomena that can encode environmental conditions from one generation and pass it on to the next (see, for example, Harper 2005; Jablonka and Lamb 2005). In other words, the perceived stability of personality patterns may simply represent a consistency in reinforcement regimens or epigenetically-coded information transfer of environmental information (prenatally and/or transgenerationally). More interesting would be cases in which structural encapsulation processes interfere with niche-seeking processes (e.g. structural-ideational arrangements that lock individuals into environments experientially disharmonious to their inborn neurobiological realities). So the question to what degree and at what stages of the life cycle "personality" characteristics can be molded still

remains an open question. Another problem with this line of research is methodological. Conceptualizations and operationalizations of the so-called shared social environment in these studies seem rather inadequate. This problem is compounded by number of questionable statistical assumptions⁷² that further obfuscate the understanding of the processes.

Evolutionary Accounts of Authoritarianism

Evolutionary explanations of authoritarianism often provide complementary insights to those emerging within behavioral genetics and/or trait psychology. Evolutionary accounts – especially in their different psychological reincarnations – assert that most (if not all) psychological mechanisms constitute adaptive outcomes that are reflective of a distant evolutionary past.⁷³ Rather than directly producing behavioral or psychological products, however, natural selection is said to create only behavioral, cognitive, and/or affective *modifications* that help resolve persistent adaptive problems. Since evolutionary processes (at least in a simplified manner) reflect interactions between local gene-pools (the sum of different genes contributed by individuals within

⁷² These include assumptions in additive models that the *error term* mainly reflects the contributions of the unshared environment and/or interactive genetic effects. The problem with this line of reasoning, however, is that variables of the *shared environment* not captured by the measurement device will *also* end up on the error term and thus conflate the importance of the unshared environment. In the same vein, additive models also tend to make the profound mistake of treating heritabilities (which are based on phenotypic inheritance patterns) as *fixed variables*. Heritabilities in these models, however, constitute *relational* constructs meaning that as the variability of the shared and unshared environment changes so will so-called “genetic” contributions. This may help explain seemingly paradoxical phenomena such as *increasing* heritabilities for certain behaviors over time or differences in IQ heritabilities between lower and to upper social classes. The latter case seems especially telling, since social environments in upper social classes are probably less variable than those of lower social classes and thus the “higher” genetic contributions to IQ may constitute nothing but a statistical artifact of the additive variance partitioning (also see Rutter 2006).

⁷³ This means that they don’t need to be necessarily adaptive in the modern environment.

a local population) *and* the environment, evolutionary dynamics operate at the group level over long periods of time. Psychological processes, on the other hand, while manifest at the individual level, only occur during specific points in time (Buss 1995; Cosmides and Tooby 1997).⁷⁴ Given the paradigmatic assumptions of this tradition, evolutionary discussions of authoritarianism thus often emphasize the adaptive qualities of the phenomenon and highlight how threat and evolved mechanisms can help increase group cohesion, foster mutual cooperation and help coordinate group tasks.

One key theoretical theme within evolutionary approaches to authoritarianism revolves around the evolutionary adaptiveness of threat. Since authoritarian processes have been linked to higher fear levels (see, for example, Eigenberger 1998; Eigenberger 1996) and stronger threat perceptions in the literature (see, for example, Hastings and Shaffer 2005; Shaffer and Hastings 2007; Stenner 2005), scholars in this tradition often try to tie evolved psychological mechanisms to group dynamics. They argue that authoritarian processes promote group cohesion in “fictitious kin” during times of threat and thus define authoritarianism as an “orientation to the group that fluctuates with group membership and perceived security within that group” (Hastings and Shaffer 2008: 427-428). By relating authoritarianism also to individual needs, Hastings and Shaffer (2008) provide a more “balanced” model in which the benefits of these adaptive responses are being highlighted:

“[t]he evolutionary mechanisms that have fostered authoritarian tendencies in human beings have also developed into psychological needs (e.g., need to belong). Those individuals who are sensitive to

⁷⁴ The two processes, of course, interact.

threat or who live in threatening environments not only survive because of authoritarian behaviors, but also satisfy their need to belong and exert their will through aggression, conventionalism, and submission to authority within the group.” (435)

Building on earlier work the authors concede, however, that the psychological need to belong – while a biological constant – not only varies in strength and intensity among different individuals but also reflects situational factors such as group size (De Cremer and Leonardelli 2003), the value ascribed to the group (Baumeister 1999) or the importance of a group to personal identity (Baumeister and Leary 1995). Taken to its logical conclusion, this framework suggests that “almost all humans harbor authoritarian characteristics and would begin to exhibit them under conditions of extreme and constant threat” (432). While adaptive during threatening times, the authors acknowledge that “only times of security afford individuals with ... [the] freedom to engage in creative behaviors, intellectualism, and politics” (435).⁷⁵

A second related theme pertains to the evolutionary role of authoritarian processes for group life. In an early critique of the literature, Smither (1993), for example, contends that the social and psychological research on authoritarianism has been fairly unsuccessful in defining the concept. He argues that by applying evolutionary personality theory and “biological concepts” such as dominance and submission, scholars would be in a better position to explain authoritarianism in “scientific, rather than pejorative” terms. In doing just that, Hastings and Shaffer (2008)

⁷⁵ For a conflicting socio-historical analysis, however, see Simonton, Dean Keith. 1984. *Genius, creativity, and leadership: historiometric inquiries*. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press. In this seminal work Simonton showed that periods of social and political instability tend to produce some of the most creative and productive times in human history.

tried to integrate biological and social-psychological views of the phenomenon to demonstrate that evolved authoritarian mechanisms not only help facilitate mutual cooperation but can also provide direct benefits to the individual. Building on Triver's (1971) influential theory of reciprocal altruism (a form of social exchange theory), the two theorists show that expectations of reciprocity can translate into exchange dynamics that are highly adaptive during times of resource scarcity and intergroup conflict. The evolution of submissive tendencies assured that individuals adhere to social conventions, fashioned their willingness to cooperate with other members of the in-group and thus guaranteed that the needs of the group and its members are being met. The exchange dynamics coupled with the efficiency of status hierarchies also helped to coordinate group behavior, reduce the cognitive load for individuals and provided the organizational substratum for need satisfaction (Hastings and Shaffer 2008).

A slightly different framework that also draws on evolutionary theory, but builds more closely on Altemeyer's dimensions of authoritarianism, was recently proposed by two German scholars. Kessler and Cohrs (2008), borrowing mainly from evolutionary game theory, argue that authoritarian processes have evolved because they help maintain high levels of cooperation in large-scale groups. For them, evolved social learning biases (e.g. especially with respect to social conformity and status dynamics) not only provide an effective strategy "to acquire knowledge in a slowly changing environment" but also promotes adherence to group conventions (conventionalism). Submission to norms and authorities (authoritarian submission), in other words, helps to "solve coordination problems and facilitate cooperation in larger communities".

Punishment of normative deviants (authoritarian aggression) becomes culturally institutionalized because it helps to ensure norm compliance and boasts commitment levels within groups. While Kessler and Cohrs (2008) stress that authoritarian processes – in general – enhance group efficacy, they acknowledge that in certain circumstances they can compromise “group functionality”. Non-authoritarian behaviors – as Janis’s work on groupthink phenomena has shown (Janis 1972) – can become more functional at times. The authors maintain, however, that low levels of authoritarianism are good and possibly even “relevant in our quickly changing times”.

This innovative blend of evolutionary, psychological and sociological explanations not only offers a thought-provoking mélange of ideas but also provides an interesting conceptual bridge to negotiate mind-body and structure-agency dualisms. Since the idea that the forces of evolution have produced a set of highly adaptive neural modules, genetically-rooted heuristics that help individuals negotiate life better is intuitively convincing, evolution and its effects on gene pool dynamics (and thus on individuals and the nature of local populations) will need to be taken into account if one desires to arrive at a deeper understanding of authoritarianism. To view authoritarianism exclusively in terms of evolved adaptive mechanisms, however, would not only be a dangerous oversimplification but also a ticket back into the conceptual dark ages.

Snapshot III: The “New” Model in Its “Historical”

Silhouettes

The leisurely stroll through the intellectual front property of the third period should neither be mistaken for a comprehensive survey of the vast body of literature nor for a systematic treatment of the subject matter. Like the two earlier conceptual excavations, the aim was mainly to highlight theoretical continuities and important conceptual developments so as to be able to situate findings within the logic of the “new” model. Engaging the conceptual Esperanto and the organizing virtues of the theoretical pillars (in the form of the tripartite model, core values and beliefs, and self dynamics), the final portion of the “archeology” - though spotlighting different factors, aspects and dynamics of the phenomena – again sports all the intricacies of the interactive tango captured by the “new” model.

Structural Dynamics: While the first period stressed macro-structural factors that percolate into more micro-structural dynamics, the third period mainly traipsed along the path laid out by the brilliant minds that sauntered the discursive mesas of the second period. It thus not only stressed the steps of the intragroup and intergroup waltzes but also further explored how socialization and other structural dynamics (e.g. social class, institutional contexts) can generate, moderate and prime authoritarian reactions. It is not surprising therefore that many of the recent reconceptualization attempts court insights of social identity theory. Work within the metaphysical confines of social dominance theory, for example, has demonstrated that SDO phenomena are often tied to salient intergroup contexts. This again mimics older findings that have

suggested that group identification alone is insufficient for setting off an authoritarian reaction; collective values and beliefs that a group espouses are often as important in mediating the phenomena. Furthermore, the interactional eddies that hierarchical intergroup settings introduce can also create structural realities that entice social dominators to draw more strongly on the legitimizing myths (collective value-belief systems) of the in-group. Duckitt's earlier work on the GCM – which merges ideas of social identity theory and older social-psychological work on group dynamics – testifies to the same importance of micro-structural processes. Focusing on issues of group salience he argues that group salience can increase social cohesion via increased commitment levels⁷⁶. While distally acknowledging individual factors, he maintains that the key to understanding authoritarian phenomena resides in intra-group processes that help maintain the normative order. Since group dynamics are tied to tensions between individual versus collective needs, the nature of authority relations, and questions of normative enforcement processes, he argues that “normative beliefs” matter but less so “values or attitudes”. He later revised his original model, however, by wedding individual factors to the structural pillars of his framework. By viewing authoritarianism now as an interactional outcome of two “motivational goals” (as conceptualized in RWA and SDO) that become contextually primed and sustained/mediated through particular “worldviews”, he – at least indirectly – provides a conceptual link between individual value-belief systems and collective ideational scripts that the group provides. Kreindler's

⁷⁶ This mirrors core insights from the sociology of religion (see Photiadis 1965, Zablocki 1999), structural symbolic interactionism (see Stryker and Burke 2000) and sociological theories of ritual processes (see Collins 2004, Kemper and Collins 1990, Knottnerus et al.1997)

DGPM, while echoing some of the very same intra-group dynamics, takes a more structuralist approach and argues that authoritarian reactions result from two intertwined processes: “category differentiation” (as measured by SDO) and “normative differentiation” (as measured by RWA).

Kreindler contends that intra-group processes impart a social identity to the individual which is then maintained by structural and ideational structures (e.g. collective rationalizations such as hierarchical intergroup beliefs and adherence to the normative order specified by in-group). Having reconceptualized the phenomena this way, authoritarian aggression simply becomes a threat-mediated outcome of intra-group processes and a ‘byproduct’ of “attitudes toward [normative] deviants”. Kreindler maintains that having a salient social identity bestows – somewhat automatically – a sense of in-group superiority and hierarchical intergroup views⁷⁷. While she acknowledges that “authoritarians” tend to endorse obedience as a “virtue” (value?), this endorsement does not constitute a stable trait but represents an emergent property of group processes. Hence, in-group deviance is especially threatening to high identifiers. In contrast, Stenner, who departs from the assumption that authoritarian predispositions (individual factors) become contextually primed via normative threats (situational beliefs that threats exist), puts less emphasis on the nature of group dynamics and much more on structural-ideational properties of the environment in which the insecure self frequents. She thus emphasizes that in non-threatening

⁷⁷ Hierarchical intergroup relations are unlikely to emerge “naturally”. Classic social-psychological research on intergroup relations (see for example Sherif and Sherif 1953, 1964) and sociological work on therapeutic versus corrosive communities (see for example Fritz 1961, Freudenberg and Jones 1991) clearly show that the nature of the environment in which group relations play out can flatten or even erase group boundaries and status hierarchies.

environments authoritarian processes are become dormant or – at least – strongly tempered.

More recently theorists have also begun to argue that scholars of authoritarianism need to pay more attention to levels of structural complexity (e.g. Duckitt, Stellmacher, Petzel). They have hinted that much of the research (but especially empirical work) misses the structural complexity of the phenomena. Stenner, for example, stresses that authoritarian processes may be related to group dynamics that are independent from the hegemony of the “dominant group” (e.g., a white supremacist group that rejects the values and the authority structures of the larger society but maintains a staunch authoritarian subculture at the fringes of society). Echoing similar sentiments, scholars like Stellmacher and Petzel have tried to create a context-free measure of “group authoritarianism” – which shows some promise. Finally, the period has also produced further evidence for potential socialization effects – especially with respect to trans-generational transmission of values, beliefs and attitudes via family, peers, social class dynamics and influence of institutional settings.

Following in the footsteps of the early pioneers, Oesterreich’s work on the “authoritarian reaction” as “flight into security”⁷⁸ or an “anxiety and uncertainty reduction phenomenon”, for example, reconceptualizes authoritarianism as an inborn “quality” (e.g. we are all born as insecure, fragile selves). Steeped in classic and contemporary notions of attachment theory, he redirects the conceptual focus back onto micro-macro structural phenomena that keep individuals in psychological

⁷⁸ clearly a modern rendition of Fromm’s “Escape from Freedom” (1941)

“bondage”. Social environments that provide few social spaces to develop secure self, structural and ideational arrangements, which nourish the primal fantasy of an everlasting childhood, keep insecure selves locked into a structural “Neverland”. Linking these dynamics also to social class dynamics (as Fromm did in the case of lower social classes) and/or overregulated environments, he maintains that the insecure self and its willingness to flirt with authoritarian niches is largely rooted in the psychologically-conditioned structural bondage of the individual. Advancing semi-structural arguments, but focusing more on the resultant ideational niche-seeking processes, Jost and his collaborators also focus the emergent matching processes between social class and ideological orientations. They argue that while lower social classes tend to gravitate toward conservative ideologies out of “fear, anxiety, dissonance, uncertainty, and instability” higher social classes adopt conservative leanings based on self-interest.

Last but not least, cross-cultural work on values and personality traits, while couched in an overt evolutionary paradigm, also discusses – at least implicitly – structural dynamics. McCrae’s emphasis on migratory patterns and its ideational consequences – although linked to trait incompatibilities between the emigrating individuals and the makeup of the local population – does provide provocative ideas as to how authoritarian structural arrangements may have emerged and how they are being sustained by bottom-up processes today. In short, while often disagreeing on the specifics, this period has again shown that top-down and bottom-up structural processes (and value-belief systems) are crucial conceptual pieces for understanding the authoritarian controversy. Below, I re-examine the individual and ideational dynamics

of the authoritarian phenomenon, and then provide discussion of the contextual whole of the several approaches brought to light in this chapter.

Individual Dynamics: Much of the research in this period continued to validate “classic insights” about secure and insecure selves - albeit often drawing on very different theoretical perspectives and operational definitions. Insecure selves, for example, have again been shown to exhibit stronger tendencies toward cognitive rigidity (e.g. compartmentalized thinking, impaired thinking, and lower receptivity for counter-attitudinal information), embrace particular cognitive styles, hold ethnocentric, prejudiced or xenophobic “attitudes” and are more susceptible to “emotional and cognitive overload”. While spelunking the well-known crevices of the authoritarian microcosm, scholars have also tried to further tackle perennial conceptual problems such as the nature of authoritarian predispositions (e.g., genetically-based personality dimensions, attitude, value or belief orientations, motivational goals or motives?) and explored the affective bedrock that sustains authoritarian processes. The strongly contested consensus seems to be that insecure selves are born with particular personality traits (e.g. lower levels of openness to experience and conscientiousness, possibly lower levels of agreeableness), traits that are perceived as fairly stable over time and across situations.

Cast against the backdrop of a renewed structure-agency skirmish, discussions about authoritarian predispositions were first sidelined but then – especially with the endorsement by scholars like Stenner, Stellmacher, Petzel, Jost or Duckitt – made a diplomatic, yet forceful, comeback. Stenner’s often brilliant work, for example, began

to link individual predispositions to more stable personality traits. For her, these predispositions (or “personal distaste[s] for differences”) are exposed to a situational dialectic that not only produces a “normative worldview” but also creates structural and ideational preferences. Chiming into this debate, the German social-psychological avant-garde led by scholars such as Stellmacher and Petzel (and to a lesser degree Oesterreich) also contend that authoritarian reactions constitute a “situation-specific activation of authoritarian beliefs” – that may be embedded in a logic of more stable personality traits. Their empirical evidence, in particular, profoundly challenges overly structuralist positions that view threat perceptions (threat beliefs) and group salience dynamics as primary triggers of the authoritarian reaction. Highly identified individuals with low authoritarian predispositions in their work, for example, seem substantially less likely to respond to threats.

Another line of research that has brought the individual back into the explanatory picture involves studies on the temporal and cross-situational stability of “personality traits” (often related to findings from twin studies) as well as research that tried to link authoritarianism to insights from behavioral genetics and evolutionary psychology. Work by a number of scholars (especially pioneers such as Hastings, Shaffer, Kessler or Cohrs) has made a strong case for viewing authoritarian predispositions as a set of evolved psychological mechanisms that – in the evolutionary past – have helped to increase group cohesion, foster mutual cooperation, and aid the organizational goals of the collective. Often stressing the evolutionary advantageousness of inborn learning biases for acquiring knowledge and minimizing cognitive overload, the authors have

thus tried to recast authoritarian construct into a more positive light. Evolutionary explanations, however, do not stand alone, but are often complemented by insights from behavioral genetics and/or evolutionary psychology.

Many studies (e.g. those by McCourt and Bell) claim to have established a solid genetic foundation for political and religious orientations (e.g. conservatism, religiosity, and traditionalism), general interest in politics, facets of authoritarianism (e.g. social conformity) or the attractiveness of certain values (e.g. inequality). Deriving their insights from large-scale cross-cultural twin studies, these scholars argue that ideational and/or structural preferences are overwhelmingly due to genetics or – to a much lesser degree – idiosyncratic socialization events. Citing the temporal stability of traits and cross-cultural differences in personality and cultural value portfolios as the main evidence, some scholars (like McCrae) go as far as to suggest cultural differences (at least before the age of globalization) reflect nothing but a phenomenon related to different trait aggregates at local populations. Correlational studies that aim to tie authoritarianism to the five-factor model of personality, however, seem to cast certain doubt on these overly deterministic interpretations.

The controversy over how to conceptualize the individual aspects of the insecure self, however, also revolves around disagreements over what role traits and predispositions play as opposed to values, beliefs and attitudes. While there seems to be a much stronger push toward viewing authoritarianism in terms of “higher-order” values or beliefs, attitudinal constructs have not completely disappeared from the conceptual scene. Bob Altemeyer’s right-wing authoritarianism (RWA) – like the authors

of the TAP – argued that RWA reflects a stable and cohering set of social attitudes and beliefs (e.g. also reflected in his work on the “dangerous world complex”). Critiques of Altemeyer’s work are thus informative because they render conceptual ambiguities more visible. While Altemeyer had to endure much criticism for his insistence that authoritarianism constitutes “personality syndrome”, his work actually offers a glimpse into a possible conceptual compromise. By defining personality (or the insecure self in terms of the “new” model) in terms of beliefs and attitudes he creates a theoretical bridge across individual, structural and ideational factors (more on this in chapter 5).

While RWA captures authoritarian facets such as social control, conformity, submission to norms and authority as well as core beliefs of a dangerous and threatening world, SDO, the other influential conceptualization attempt, taps more into issues of social and economic inequality and beliefs that the world is a competitive jungle. Social dominance theory (SDO) while shifting the conceptual focus toward intergroup relations, thus also reaffirms the centrality of individual “preferences” or “general attitude orientations” (e.g. toward hierarchical or egalitarian group relations) that help pre-pattern intergroup dynamics as well as individual preferences with respect to structural arrangements (e.g. hierarchy-enhancing social roles). Duckitt, Stenner, Feldmann or Eckhardt have provided convincing arguments for viewing authoritarianism as a “value orientation” that gets primed situationally (especially via normative threats). While differing on the specifics, these authors also agree that individuals that endorse more Hobbesian views of the world and social conformity are especially susceptible to developing authoritarian reactions.

A related approach to bringing order to the diverse findings on individual-level processes (and related ideational and structural phenomena) comes from work on motivational goals and motivated social cognition. Duckitt's DGMM, for example, postulated the existence of a "competitively driven dominance-power-superiority motivation" (for him SDO) and a "threat-driven social control and group defense motivation" (for him RWA) that get situationally-primed by threats (situational threat beliefs). By creating a causal chain from personality characteristics via social worldviews to ideational affinities, the model offers an interesting exercise of theory integration. In a related attempt Jost and his collaborators blended theories of personality (e.g., authoritarianism, dogmatism-intolerance of ambiguity), epistemic and existential needs (e.g., the need for cognitive closure, regulatory focus, terror management) with theories of collective rationalization (e.g., social dominance, system justification). They argue that an ensemble of "social psychological needs, goals, and motives" form the ideological "substructure" that predisposes individuals toward particular ideational narratives. While most of these theorists advance rational, and often over-cognized, accounts, some have tried to pay renewed attention to the importance of affective and/or subconscious undercurrents of authoritarian-like phenomenon.

Duckitt, for example, has stressed the importance of "affective intensities" that shape salience, while Stenner has promoted political orientations to "expressions of primitive passions". These affective undertows as Oesterreich for example has observed leads insecure selves to develop "habitualized reactive" tendencies. Identity threats for insecure selves thus set off "compensatory" mechanisms in which the social self

becomes the main source of security and self-esteem. These affective and cognitive dynamics, however, do not need to necessarily operate at a conscious level but may be submerged into a more subconscious reality. Jost and his colleagues, for example, have pointed out that ideology-consistent attitudes and behaviors may often reflect more subconscious or unconscious processes. While the authors take advantage of the recent de-stigmatization of the “unconsciousness” in the social and behavioral sciences, their insights echo older philosophical and psychoanalytical insights that argue that individual’s often act in accordance with their values and beliefs – even if they are not consciously aware of these influences (e.g. more on this in chapter 5). Taken together, the efforts of this period constitute a stronger push toward the integration of related bodies of literature. By bringing the biological actor back into the conceptual picture, the last few decades have thus especially excelled in illuminating the subtle interplay that internal and external choreographies play in shaping individual cognitive-affective realities.

Ideational Dynamics: The third stint of this conceptual excavation – while more limited – also provides further testimony to the theoretical continuities in ideational dynamics; as well, it pays strong homage to the intellectual *dernier cri* of each historic time. Deconstructing social life into ever finer layers of reality and reassembling them into new and interesting ways, theorists especially shined in bringing out more contested aspects of the ideational problematique. Feldman, Stenner and Jost’s systematic pursuits to set authoritarianism apart from conservatism, while often mirroring earlier efforts, are exemplary in their quality and scope. These authors, for example, showed

that conservatism not only constitutes a multi-dimensional value-belief system that differs substantially from the authoritarian construct but also one that changes over time. They argued that conservatism can be better understood by differentiating between core aspects (in Jost's rendition: "attitudes": change versus stability, equality versus inequality) and peripheral aspects of conservative ideologies (in Jost's rendition: "desire" for order and stability, gradual change, established social norms, strong authority figures and support for social and economic inequality). This definition also overlaps with other theoretical formulations: SDO stresses intergroup inequalities, Rockeach emphasizes the two values "equality" and "freedom" and RWA focuses on attitudes and beliefs toward social conformity.

Stenner's work, in contrast, empirically demonstrated that affinities between authoritarianism and conservatism are strongly moderated by the nature of the social environment. She contends that while both phenomena share an "aversion for novelty", she maintains that authoritarianism revolves around values of "oneness and sameness" while conservatism centers on "stability and certainty". She goes as far as to argue that the interaction between the two phenomena can span the entire spectrum from mutually compatible to incompatible. While important questions remain, these efforts have illustrated the ongoing utility of the conceptual distinction between the two. Research during this time also helped to further illuminate the nature, structure and content of ideational systems – including the role of Hobbesian versus Rousseauian "worldviews" in shaping authoritarian processes and affinities. Social dominance theory, for example, provided a new way of understanding how ideational narratives affect

intergroup dynamics. To create ideational scripts that legitimize existing structural arrangements the dominant groups create "*legitimizing myths*" that crystallize intergroup relations. Ideational systems that promote hierarchical intergroup dynamics are thus especially important to SDO high scorers (a variant of the insecure self) – who as a consequence tend to exhibit much lower levels of empathy, tolerance, communality, and altruism than lower scorers.

It is interesting to note that Stenner's work echoes aspects of Jost's work on system justification (in which he advances the classic sociological mantra that ideological systems emerge as collective rationalizations beneficial mainly to the elite). In the same vein, Kreindler argues that ideology acts as a "filter" (ideational scripts in the terminology of the "new" model) through which individuals perceive and structure intergroup relations. Ideology, for her, thus creates forces that strongly mediate tendencies to affiliate or disaffiliate from structural arrangements. In this framework, authoritarian submission becomes an "ideology" that defines the proper role of authority and authority relations an "embodiment of group values". Ideological differentiation thus constitutes a phenomenon that is inherently wrapped up with processes of structural differentiation; ideational dynamics (value-belief systems) either entrench, demarcate and deepen existing structural arrangements or provide justifications for creating new ones. Studies have shown, for example, that societies with higher degrees of ideological differentiation (= existence of competing value-belief systems espoused by different groups) often intensify authoritarian processes. Viewing ideology as "learned knowledge structures" that enshrine "interrelated network of

beliefs, opinions and values”, Jost’s work on “motivated social cognition” also resurrects earlier insights on the affective dimensions of ideologies (e.g. Tomkins). In short, contemporary research reaffirms the wisdom of the founding fathers: it shows that ideational factors cannot be separated from individual and structural dynamics without losing explanatory power in the process.

The Bigger Picture: It is probably an understatement to say that the past three decades have interjected more “balanced” views into the academic discussion of authoritarianism. While earlier epochs have mainly stressed negative aspects, there is an increasing recognition that it has also positive sides. Unlike the critical theorists, contemporary scholars emphasize that authoritarian mechanisms have not only evolved as rational and highly adaptive strategies to threatening environments but also as protective “schemes” that offer psychological benefits (especially to the insecure self). While the last installment of the authoritarian documentary has helped to carve out new conceptual inroads; developed more reliable measures; drawn more attention to structural explanations; renewed the interest in the functional role of motivational goals, values, value-orientations; core beliefs and/or worldviews and acknowledged that authoritarian phenomena operate at different levels of structural complexity, it still fails to provide satisfactory explanations to crucial issues.

Unanswered still are perennial questions such as (1) what creates membership salience, (2) why do “some” (as opposed to any) groups become “salient”, (3) why do high identifiers with low authoritarian predispositions seem less prone to the authoritarian reaction, (4) what precise mechanism creates affinities, (5) by what

processes do individuals and groups acquire and maintain primary belief structures or (6) do groups that espouse more non-authoritarian ideologies produce equally strong authoritarian tendencies? The continued ambiguity of existing conceptual vocabularies and the absence of a clearly agreed-upon interdisciplinary terminology do not help either. It is not all together clear, for example, what the difference is between motivational goals, motives, motivations, value dimensions, personality syndromes (in the Altemeyerian reincarnation) and/or belief dimensions. Even the most ambitious and systematic attempts of theory integration continue to fall short of the goal of conceptual clarity. Jost's rather loose use of "motives", for instance, conflates a range of different constructs (such as needs, desires, values, beliefs, attitudes, goals and even opinions). Dodging an overly reductionist boomerang, but trying to retain as much of the existing complexity, Chapter 5 thus provides a renewed (and admittedly somewhat sketchy) attempt to reconcile competing narratives of the authoritarian phenomenon. Departing from the assumption that many of these theoretical accounts are compatible (at least in a more abstract sense), the chapter recruits an army of conceptual actors to make a small and humble sociological contribution to what E.O. Wilson's (1998) called "Consilience" – the unification of all bodies of knowledge⁷⁹.

⁷⁹ Sociobiologist E.O. Wilson, of course, was not the first to advocate the creation of an interdisciplinary grand narrative. In the 19th century utopian futurist and anarchist Stephen Pearl Andrews, relaying the torch of the Greek philosophers, pushed for a new "universology" – an academic discipline endowed with the mission to uncover the interconnecting principles and truths across all domains of knowledge.

Chapter 5: Toward a New Model

“Trust in consilience is the foundation [and – to some degree – reality] of the natural sciences. ... Given that human action comprises events of physical causation, why should the social sciences and humanities be impervious to consilience with the natural sciences? ... It is not enough to say that human action is historical, and that history is an unfolding of unique events. [There is] [n]othing fundamental [that] separates the course of human history from the course of physical history ... ” (Wilson 1998:10).

Having taken in the sights and sounds of the conceptual past, the question now arises as to how these seemingly divergent ideas can be placed into a more parsimonious and coherent narrative. Since the complexity at hand naturally frustrates any ambitions for a true grand narrative, the next two chapters can only sketch out – in two major installments – how a few simple conceptual moves may provide *partial* micro-macro, agency-structure and structure-culture⁸⁰ linkages that – in the ultimate equation – may help formulate a more holistic model of authoritarian phenomena (see Figure 1). Inspired by Max Weber’s explorations of the concept of “elective affinities”, this chapter therefore sets out to develop a conceptual value-belief Esperanto that can somewhat help meet the frustrating complexity. After briefly discussing what values and beliefs are (and what they are not), how they are acquired and how they change, the chapter then discusses how putting value-belief complexes center stage may not only help transcend the analytical divide between individual, structural and ideational factors

⁸⁰ To keep it simple, structure here is conceived in terms of stable *and* fluid patterns of social interactions (at different levels of abstraction) while culture here only refers to the ideational elements (non-material culture) that characterize these interactions (it’s assumed that material culture reflects non-material culture).

but also provide suggestions for a (partial) reconciliation of the often divergent explanations of authoritarianism (as a “personality predisposition”, a structural phenomena steeped in group processes and/or a phenomenon woven into the fabric of ideological systems). While the thought of having to drudge page after page through the nightmarish landscapes of definitional vanity may not be the most appealing to the reader, it seems a necessary “evil” on the road to conceptual enlightenment.

Providing a plausible mechanism for the apparent social chemistry does not end with the mere development of a value-belief framework, however, it calls for a number of additional theoretical twists; it necessitates, for example, a conceptual merger between value-belief research with insights from various symbolic interactionist traditions (mainly in form of identity theories) and social identity theory. Primarily drawing on the work on identity standards, personal versus social identities (selves) as well as self-verification processes, the second half of this chapter aims to outline what such a theoretical synthesis could potentially look like and how the new conceptual bonanza may provide a modus operandi for explaining the elusive concept of “elective affinities”.

Part I: Creating a Universal Value-Belief Esperanto

Theoretical accounts of authoritarianism have – to varying degrees – always stressed the importance of values and beliefs in their explanations. Despite their frequent implication in conceptual and empirical narratives, it remains often unclear as to how these constructs (and their conceptual spin-offs) actually differ from and relate to other terms such as needs, traits, attitudes, norms, interests and/or motives. To overcome some of the conceptual ambiguity found in the literature and to till the conceptual topsoil for theory integration, the chapter will begin with a discussion of the nature of values, beliefs and their conceptual cousins. While the somewhat lengthy theoretical detour may seem disjointed, unrelated to the previous chapters, at times even outright unnecessary, the reader will be asked to defer judgment until *after* the conceptual elaborations. It is hoped that the first part of the chapter can make a case for the potential utility of a universal value-belief Esperanto – a language of conceptual diplomacy - that may be able to help (at least partially) decipher the mysteries behind Weber’s “elective affinities”. Rather than demoting it to a mere conceptual metaphor, however, the discussion aims to elevate Weber’s work to an important theoretical precedent for the use (and importance) of value and belief affinities in social research in general and for the study of authoritarianism in particular. But let’s go back to the basics for a moment.

Postmodern Limbo: The Problem of Construct Infidelity

Values (and to a lesser degree beliefs) are often confused with related phenomena such as “attitudes, motivations, objects, measurable quantities, substantive areas of behavior, affect-laden customs or traditions, and relationships such as those between individuals, groups, objects, events” (Kluckhohn 1951: 390), “sentiments, preferences, cathexes, and valences” (Smith 1969: 98), motives (Rohan 2000) or “interests, pleasures, likes, ... duties, moral obligations, desires, wants, goals, needs, aversions and attractions, and many other kinds of selective orientations” (Williams 1979:16). While it is far beyond the scope of this chapter to provide a comprehensive account of the similarities and differences (for more information see Adler 1956; Boudon 2001; Converse 1964; Dewey 1925; Hechter 1993; Hitlin and Piliavin 2004; Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck 1961; Maio, Olson, Bernard, and Luke 2003; Marini 2000; Rohan 2000; Rokeach 1968), the following section will spotlight in what ways needs, wants, motives, personality traits, attitudes, norms as well as interests differ from values (and somewhat tangentially beliefs). Creating tighter conceptual boundaries around these constructs will not only will help clarify some of the confusion on authoritarianism but also help provide a more informed platform for the discussion of actual linkages to value-belief dynamics.

Needs, Wants, Motives, Interests and Social Norms

While many of these constructs share similarities with values and beliefs, they should not be confused with them. Needs like drives, for example, constitute biological requirements. This view has been most forcefully argued by Abraham Maslow – who in

one of his early versions of the theory of human motivation – suggested five interrelated sets of human goals (basic needs) that create an in situ hierarchy of prepotency (Maslow 1943b). A few years later he published a revised version in which he clarified and refined his “hierarchy needs” with “*deficiency needs*” such as physiological needs (e.g. breathing, food, sexual activity), security needs (e.g. personal and financial security, health and well-being, safety net), love and belonging needs (e.g. friendship, intimacy, family) and esteem needs (e.g. self-esteem, confidence, achievement, respect of others, respect by others) at the bottom, and “*self-actualization needs*” such as acceptance, problem centering, need for privacy, morality, sense of humor at the top (Maslow 1954). Other scholars have proposed different theoretical models of needs. Murray (1938) in his classic expose on personality, postulates 20 human needs (including, interestingly enough, the need for dominance, acquisition, or succorance⁸¹). Unlike Maslow, however, he stresses that all needs – though to varying degrees – exist in every individual. Our theoretical friend Erich Fromm (1941; 1959/1981), on the other hand, discusses five major psychosocial needs (the need for relatedness, the need for transcendence, the need for rootedness, the need for identity and the need for a frame of orientation) which he delineates from more physiological needs such as food, sex, shelter or security. In a more contemporary version of the needs construct, Max-Neef et al. (1990) proposed a list of ten fundamental human needs (subsistence, protection, affection, understanding, participation, leisure, creation, identity and freedom) that can be classified along four

⁸¹ This makes one wonder if it will ever be possible to distinguish socially and historically-contingent expressions of needs from actual biological needs.

domains: being, having, doing and interacting. While many of these theoretical accounts disagree on the specifics, they not only seem to tap into similar underlying *biological realities* but also often stress that needs are embedded into interrelated and interactive systems of needs.⁸²

Needs as biological realities, however, should be set apart conceptually from wants and motives. Wants, mirroring somewhat the distinction between beliefs and attitudes are *socially*-primed desires for *specific* objects and thus can exist virtually in an infinite number of permutations. Wants also differ from needs in that they tend to be much less consequential for the individual. Unlike frustration of wants, the deprivation of needs can easily lead to psychological dysfunctions or worse, including death (Fromm 1947; Rokeach 1968; Williams Jr. 1979). Likewise, the distinction between needs and motives also seems at times to get blurred in the literature on authoritarianism. In their simplest forms motivational processes involve the activation and/or energization of goal-oriented behavior. While needs (as well as drives) constitute innate biological mechanisms, motives constitute innate mechanisms *modified by social learning*. Some have thus tried to distinguish needs and motives based on the nature of the “need” that is being satisfied – with physiological “needs” referred to as needs and non-physiological “needs” (e.g. belongingness) as motives – though this distinction still creates conceptual problems. Motives, for example, can – as the case of “motivation for social status” illustrates – take on derivative characteristics of biological drives (e.g. sex drive). To complicate matters even more, motives – like needs – can also be defined in terms of

⁸² Even Maslow (1954) – who is often seen as having had an exclusively hierarchical conception of needs – argued that the two major need hierarchies “are interrelated rather than sharply separated” (97).

deficiencies (e.g. motives to reduce hunger or thirst) or abundance (e.g. motives to attain greater satisfaction and stimulation) (see Franken 2007). In research relevant to authoritarianism, some authors (e.g. Jost, Federico, and Napier 2009; Jost, Glaser, Kruglanski, and Sulloway 2003)⁸³, seem to apply the term “motive” in an even broader sense. These authors, for example, created a series of overarching and fairly inclusive motive categories that range from “epistemic motives”, “existential motives”, “ideological motives” (or system justification motivation) to “relational motives”⁸⁴. While often failing to clearly delineate motives from needs (or wants), they maintain that these “motives” provide a psychological substructure that helps manage uncertainty and fear of the unknown. While, this ambitious attempt succeeds in blending a wide range of theoretical perspectives, it still mixes biological factors (e.g. needs) with biologically-rooted but socially-primed phenomena (e.g. wants and motives).⁸⁵

In the same vein, some political scientists have employed the construct of “interests” to capture the functions of needs, wants and values. Mainly influenced by Perry’s (1950; 1954) pioneering work in this field, these scholars maintain that “value” constitutes an emergent property that comes with the interest that an individual

⁸³ In a similar vein Duckitt’s (2001) use of motivational goals also blurs the biological and the social components of the phenomena.

⁸⁴ Recall from chapter 4 that “*epistemic motives*” include constructs such as dogmatism, intolerance of ambiguity, “*existential motives*” relate to constructs such as self-esteem, terror management, fear or threat, “*ideological motives*” to constructs such as self-interest, group dominance, and system justification, “*relational motives*” to “*desires*” for social interaction, needs for social or personal identification, solidarity, or shared reality and that “*system justification*” refers to the “*motivation*” to defend, bolster, and justify the status quo (see Jost et al. 2003).

⁸⁵ To be fair to the authors it should be pointed out that needs *in situ* are probably always manifested in terms of wants and/or motives. Separating the biological, social and cultural elements of the phenomenon, however, is theoretically useful as it opens doors for theory integration across the “hard” and “soft” sciences.

bestows onto a thing or idea⁸⁶. Defining interest thus as a fairly broad construct which includes desires, will, purpose, pleasure and acts, Perry argued that interests – unlike the other constructs – are better able to capture the full range of emotive, cognitive, connotative and behavioral processes associated with phenomena observed in “value” dynamics. Rokeach (1973), however, eloquently argued that while values and interests may share some of the same “attributes” (e.g. they can be both representations of needs or help guide action), interests reflect a much “narrower concept”. Viewing interests as only “one of the many manifestations of a value”, he contends that interests can neither be linked to end-states or evaluative standards nor do they to form formal “interest systems” that prioritize or valorize certain interests. He thus maintains that interests are probably more closely aligned (functionally as well as conceptually) to social attitudes in that they reflect a “favorable or unfavorable attitude toward certain objects [...] or activities” (22).

Others have wrestled as to how needs, motives and values are related. These scholars have suggested that motives and motivational goals undergird value priorities and that values are thus indicative of affective preferences of the individual (Schwartz and Bilsky 1987). While “security values” reflect “motivational goals” of safety, harmony, and stability of society, of relationships, and of self”, self-direction values, in contrast, encapsulate the “motivational goals” of independent thought and action (and thus include more positively-valenced emotions such as high arousal). Feather (1992), in contrast, argues that needs and values create merely “valences” that shape the

⁸⁶ This also echoes philosophical debates in axiology over the roots of value: in the valued, valuator or valuating (see Schein 1972).

“subjective definition of a situation, so that some objects, activities, and potential outcomes within the immediate situation become invested with goal properties, and are seen as having positive valence ... or negative valence”. As such he contends that values are not only “generalized beliefs of what is or is not desirable [or desired]” but can also function as “motives”. Like Feather, Rokeach (1973) agrees that values should not be seen as “isomorphic with needs” but maintains that values reflect “cognitive representations and transformation of needs” that serve “societal demands no less than individual needs” (20). Hitlin and Piliavin (2004) echo Rokeach in that respect when they argue that:

“[n]eeds connote biological influences ... [while values] capture a distinguishing feature of social life; we can reflexively examine our needs. Values serve as socially acceptable, culturally defined ways of articulating needs” (361).

In short, needs for the purpose of this dissertation are conceived as stable biological propensities of biological entities that – through social interactional dynamics – can become translated into wants, motives, interest and values.

A final source of ambiguity in the literature refers to the use of social norms (and the related term “normative”). Stankov (2007), for example defines social norms as “a set of beliefs about the standards of behavior that society, sometimes implicitly, sanctions and enforces.” As such he maintains that norms “capture our beliefs (or perceptions) of what is encouraged by the society” (242). This, of course, collapses levels of structural complexity to the norms of dominant society. Rokeach (1973), in contrast, concedes that both values and norms refer to prescriptive or proscriptive

beliefs that involve modes of behavior but maintains that only values can encapsulate desirable (or desired) end states. He thus conceived values as “more personal and internal” whereas norms for him were more “consensual and external to the person” (19). Hitlin and Piliavin (2004), in contrast, stress that norms and values involve group-level phenomena that require shared agreement and thus maintain that norms are “situation based” rules that capture an “ought” sense while “values are trans-situational” guides that reflect “a personal or cultural ideal” (362). Others have tried to compare intergroup and group beliefs to social norms (Stangor and Leary 2006) but this seems rather problematic because it blurs the distinction between statements of “fact” (e.g. beliefs) with statements of preferences (e.g. values). To simplify matters and to provide a more coherent conceptual currency, norms here are conceived as *encapsulated* values and belief complexes that are associated with particular social structural arrangements (e.g. groups, institutions, countries). Unlike values and beliefs, however, norms constitute collective *means* by which particular value-belief systems are being sanctioned, enforced and/or maintained.

Personality Traits and Social Attitudes

Ambiguities in two important additional constructs often seem to impede further theory integration of the literature on authoritarianism: personality traits and social attitudes. So let’s have a crack at this: what actually are personality and personality traits and how do they relate to values? Stankov (2007), for example, answers this fairly straightforward question by arguing that personality constitutes “a collection of emotion, thought, and behavior patterns unique to a person.” He stresses

that trait psychologists often use the term *personality trait* “to describe a constellation of characteristics that are captured by a group of variables.” (240) Others, however, prefer treating traits more in terms of “enduring dispositions” that may either be positive or negative (while values refer to “enduring goals” that are “primarily positive”). For those scholars, traits refer primarily to consistent patterns of thoughts, feelings and actions as well as enshrine unique abilities of the individual (Roccas, Sagiv, Schwartz, and Knafo 2002). In contrast, the Five Factors Model of Personality (FFM), which represents probably one the most widely-accepted trait personality theories to date, views trait clusters (statistical aggregates) as genetically-based personality patterns (Costa Jr, Busch, Zonderman, and McCrae 1986; McCrae 2002; McCrae, Costa, and Wiggins 1996; McCrae and John 1992). The “theory” postulates the existence of five genetically-rooted human traits easily captured by the mnemonic device OCEAN: openness to new experience, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness and neuroticism⁸⁷. *Openness to new experience* (sometimes also called intellect) is understood as a general tendency toward appreciation of art, emotion, adventure, unusual ideas, imagination, curiosity, and variety of experience. Individuals that are open to new experience tend to be intellectually curious, more creative and more aware of their feelings. In contrast, individuals with low levels of openness tend to have more conventional, traditional interests. They tend to prefer more straightforward,

⁸⁷ One of the most widely used measurement devices is the NEO PI-R which includes 60 items, five factors, six facets and two items each. The traits and facets are as follows: “*openness to experience*” (facets: fantasy, aesthetics, feelings, actions, ideas and values), “*conscientiousness*” (facets: competence, order, dutifulness, achievement striving, self-discipline, deliberation), “*extraversion*” (facets: warmth, gregariousness, assertiveness, activity, excitement seeking, positive emotion), “*agreeableness*” (facets: trust, straightforwardness, altruism, compliance, modesty, tendermindedness) and “*neuroticism*” (facets: anxiety, hostility, depression, self-consciousness, impulsiveness, vulnerability to stress).

unambiguous, less complex, and more predictable environments. The second trait *conscientiousness* is believed to tap into a biological tendency toward self-discipline, dutiful behavior, achievement striving and impulse control. People high on this trait prefer planned rather than spontaneous behaviors. *Extroversion*, in contrast, captures the need for certain types of stimulation. Extroverted individuals thus tend to express more “positive” emotions, surgency (related to the desire to influence or control others), and a general preference to be in the company of others. Introverts, on the other hand, lack the social effervescence and thus tend to be more quiet, low-key, deliberate, and less involved with the social world. *Agreeableness*, in turn, refers to a genetic tendency to be more compassionate and cooperative. The trait reflects individual differences in the general concern for social harmony. More agreeable individuals tend to be generally considerate, friendly, generous, helpful, and willing to put the other’s interests before their own. Agreeable people are also said to subscribe to more Rousseauian views of human nature (though given the actual conceptualization of the trait this seems somewhat questionable). The final trait *neuroticism* is conceived to capture the general tendency toward the experience of negative emotions (e.g. anger, anxiety, or depression). Individuals with high scores on this trait tend to be emotionally more reactive, vulnerable to stress and susceptible to experiencing “normal” situations as threatening (McCrae and John 1992). In other words, for trait psychologists, values are nothing but social and cultural adaptations of personality traits and *not* vice versa (McCrae's view in Hofstede and McCrae 2004).

While values and traits are conceptually distinct, they do share a number of similarities. Both constructs, for example, tap into fairly stable cross-situational phenomena that show similar age dynamics and have and/or express motivational properties (Brewer and Roccas 2001; Roccas, Sagiv, Schwartz, and Knafo 2002; Rohan 2000). Values and traits are also related in fairly consistent patterns: agreeableness tends to most strongly correlate – for example – with Schwartz’s value types of benevolence and tradition, openness to experience with self-direction and universalism, extroversion with achievement and stimulation while conscientiousness correlates mostly with achievement and conformity (Roccas, Sagiv, Schwartz, and Knafo 2002; also see Table 1). With respect to authoritarian or authoritarian-like phenomena the empirical findings implicate mainly three traits (openness to experience, facets of conscientiousness and to a lesser degree agreeableness) in predisposing individuals to adopting authoritarian-esque value-belief complexes (Caprara, Vecchione, and Schwartz 2009; Duckitt 2009). In a recent meta-analysis of 71 studies (N = 22,068 participants), Sibley and Duckitt (2008), for example, found that two traits – openness to new experiences and conscientiousness – can capture most the observed differences in political preferences. The authors, therefore, argue that individual variations in liberal and conservative orientations are “robust, replicable, and behaviorally significant”. While liberals tend to be more open-minded, creative, intellectually curious and novelty-seeking, conservatives are substantially more orderly, conventional and better organized. Truskovsky and Vaux (1997) echo these findings by arguing that openness to new experience and conscientiousness can account for as much as 25% of the variance

in RWA scores while the remaining personality traits explain less than 1%. Duckitt (2009) thus maintains that it is those particular personality constellations that lead individuals to “value order, stability, and security” and influence “their beliefs about how dangerous or threatening their world may be” (314). Butler (2000), partially agrees but qualifies his comments by stressing that the “the authoritarian syndrome is primarily characterized by low openness to experience”.

Part of these divergent interpretations can probably partially be explained by the nature of the “trait” construct of conscientiousness. As Roccas et al. (2002) have rightly pointed out, the trait encompasses both “*proactive*” facets (competence, self-discipline, and achievement striving) which “correlate substantially with achievement values but not with conformity values” and “*inhibitive*” facets (order, dutifulness, and deliberation) which primarily correlate with conformity but not with achievement values. The latter facets are said to mainly tap into processes of impulse control and restraints on actions. Other authors have found positive associations with openness to experience with Rokeach’s values of “world of beauty”, “broadmindedness” and “imaginative” and negative correlations with “social recognition, salvation, clean, obedient, responsible, and self-controlled” (Dollinger, Leong, and Ulicni 1996) – values which should be noted share many similarities with the inhibitive “trait aspects” of conscientiousness (order, dutifulness, self-discipline). Higher religiosity – a phenomenon that often has been associated with authoritarian tendencies – seems to reflect mainly a cultural adaptation of the two traits of agreeableness and conscientiousness. Based on a meta-analysis of 19 countries Saroglou (2009), for example, demonstrated that these patterns are fairly

stable across different religious dimensions and social and demographic variables, thus questioning the general assumption that religious tendencies somewhat quasi-automatically relate to authoritarian tendencies.

Differences, however, can be found between more authoritarian and less authoritarian religious orientations. Members of more “closed-minded” religious traditions tend to have much lower levels of openness to new experiences. Given this lower receptivity to novelty, these individuals – while the causality here is still to be determined – manage their lives via strict adherence to values of tradition and conformity and concurrent quasi-devaluation of other values such as autonomy, universalism, hedonism, power, and achievement. Structural-ideational niches that offer an “integrated set of worldviews and practices that solidify ... these value priorities” – according to Saroglou and Muñoz-García (2008) – seem therefore especially attractive. Believers in more open-minded religions, in contrast, tend to score higher at least on some facets of openness which leads some authors to suggest that these religious value-belief-systems may provide “some elements that allow them to maintain a sense of self control”. Since few studies have made connections between values and extroversion and neuroticism⁸⁸, the general patterns thus seems to suggest that “authoritarian values” are mainly related to lower levels of openness to new experience, to higher levels of the inhibitive facets of conscientiousness and possibly to lower levels of agreeableness (at least on some facets). To some these empirical findings suggest “that

⁸⁸ Indirect evidence, for example, comes from a recent study by Van Hiel et al. (2007b) who found that neuroticism is related to RWA – though this relationship is partially mediated by core beliefs in the existence of a dangerous world.

values and traits are conceptually and empirically distinct, yet related ... constructs. Neither can assimilate nor subsume the other. Traits refer to what people are like, values to what people consider important” (Roccas, Sagiv, Schwartz, and Knafo 2002: 799).

Taken together then, it seems authoritarian phenomena are linked to value-belief orientations as well as individual predispositions that seem to limit novelty, stress order, certainty, and provide predictability in the social environment. Likewise, the fact that “authoritarians” tend *not* to be more neurotic (e.g. biologically more hostile or aggressive) than their non-authoritarian brothers is in tune with the general assumption that authoritarian aggression reflects a threat-triggered defensive mechanism and not an inborn tendency. However, the question still remains fairly open as to what degree these “traits” are actually biological as opposed to outcomes of structural and ideational dynamics. The reductionist undertows that buoy much of contemporary trait psychology (and its conceptual friends: evolutionary psychology and behavioral biology) easily lead to reification processes in which profoundly social processes are turned into *seeming* personality “traits”. This reductionist fallacy is no clearer than in a current Social Psychology Quarterly article “*Why Liberals and Atheists are More Intelligent*” (Kanazawa 2010). The author used data from the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health and the General Social Surveys to argue that adult IQ is strongly correlated with the “espousal of liberalism, atheism, and sexual exclusivity in men (but not in women)” (51). Couched into an evolutionary Savannah-IQ Interaction Hypothesis and using – among other things – documented IQ differences between very liberal (IQ = 106.42) and very

conservative individuals (IQ = 94.82) as “evidence”, he argues that “smarter” individuals (which for trait psychologists is of course related to openness to new experience) are more likely to adopt “evolutionary novel values” (by which Kanazawa means liberalism and atheism). Setting aside the self-congratulatory and self-serving nature of the argument, the article enshrines the ultimate shortcomings of the trait approach. Rather than viewing the neural networks as semi-flexible rubber bands that can be stretched – within limits – by the social environment, the built-in genetic determinism of trait psychology (and its closely aligned academic allies) tends to crystallize and ossify *perceived* stabilities – a conceptual myopia which can potentially miss important dynamics that emerge from structural-ideational niche-seeking and pattern maintenance processes. Furthermore, the item similarities between personality inventories and value portfolios that are often used in research raise profound questions as to what it actually is that is being measured: the consistency of the item overlap and/or the relatedness of the two constructs.

Much confusion in the literature on authoritarianism also involves questions as to what degree authoritarianism reflects a social attitude complex (Altemeyer 1988; Duckitt 2009; Eysenck and Wilson 1978). Interpretations of the literature are especially complicated by the fact that early researchers often conceived of social attitudes as a more inclusive construct. Katz (1960), for example, viewed value expressions as a function of attitudes while Newcomb et al. (1965:45) understood them as “special cases of the attitude concept”. Rokeach (1973)’s influential work on values, beliefs and attitudes, on the other hand, provided a strong impetus toward a meaningful

redefinition of attitudes into a narrower concept. Having identified a number of differences between social attitudes and values, he argued that attitudes (1) mainly reflect the organization of many beliefs while values constitute that of one or fewer, (2) are more situation-bound than values, (3) do not function as standards while values do, (4) are more object-specific and thus more numerous, (5) are less central to the personality and (6) are much less directly linked to motivation. Attitudes thus are now commonly conceptualized as favorable or unfavorable evaluations of specific objects (Hitlin and Piliavin 2004) that “provide a temporary solution to the problem of the abstractness or specificity of people’s judgments” (Rohan 2000: 258) and are thus reflected by narrower “statements that elicit the expression of beliefs about what is true, real, or good” (Stankov 2007). More contemporary theoretical accounts of social attitudes stress two major themes in the literature: attitude structure and attitude function (Maio, Olson, Bernard, and Luke 2003).

To explain attitude structure, scholars have – for example – advanced a three-component model that stresses that attitudes not only “express feelings, beliefs, and past behaviors regarding an attitude object” but that they – as “net evaluations” – can also shape feelings, beliefs and behaviors (Maio, Olson, Bernard, and Luke 2003). The belief-based model (see Ajzen and Fishbein 1977), in contrast, views attitudes as mainly affective responses to an object that are influenced by beliefs alone. It thus stresses the role of expectancies in which stronger expectancies tend to predict stronger behavioral outcomes. Two other theoretical accounts, the unidimensional and bidimensional models, try to move past the static conceptions and by trying to incorporate the

positivity or negativity of past experiences (Maio, Olson, Bernard, and Luke 2003). Research on attitude structure is often complemented by work on attitude functions. Here scholars tend to link attitudes – at least indirectly – to “psychological needs”, utilitarian functions and/or values. Threats to attitude objects that threaten values are especially important in the understanding of attitude activation (Maio and Olson 1994). In short, compared to values, attitudes are much less central to issues of personhood (Erickson 1995; Hitlin 2003). Nevertheless, it is interesting to note how many similarities these different constructs share.

Authoritarianism has been linked to a range of social attitudes from negative views on “deviant” outgroups (e.g. homosexuals), endorsement of more traditional gender roles to more extrapunative stances (Altemeyer 1981; Altemeyer 1988). While attitudes have been linked to the nature of values (and in extension to the types of personality traits), some scholars have suggested that attitude strength may – unlike values – be more related to the nature of the experience (Maio, Olson, Bernard, and Luke 2006). Gilovich (1987), for example, has provided empirical support that attitudes based on indirect experience tend to be much more polarized. The author speculates that this may be due to the availability of “detailed information” (294). Similar attitude patterns have been demonstrated at the group level with respect to stereotypes and attitude formation. Thompson and collaborators (2000), for example, found that group stereotypes that are obtained via secondhand information (indirect experience) often lead to more extreme attitudes. The authors suggest that stereotypes are “fundamentally altered through social communication and these effects are in part

responsible for the biases that stereotypes induce” (567). These findings suggest that radicalization of social attitudes (and in extension beliefs and values) can be affected, triggered or sustained via structural and ideational realities that minimize *direct* intergroup relations either via structural encapsulation and/or value-belief systems that valance ingroup dynamics over intergroup interactions. They also hint at the fact that meaning construction, social perception and attitude-belief-value dynamics probably constitute profoundly neuronal patterns ... after all, the way humans make sense of the world is constrained by the biological hardware that sustains us.

Experiential Summaries: Values, Beliefs and Value-Belief Systems

Having tried to conceptually set related concepts apart, it is now time to more closely characterize differential dynamics that govern the fascinating universe of values and beliefs. That being said, it is a somewhat sobering and humbling recognition to realize that there seems to exist:

“little coherence between the different approaches used across conceptualization and measurement of values. Most surprising is the almost complete lack of reference that the major empirical researchers on values make to relevant social theory, and vice versa” (Hitlin and Piliavin 2004:359-360).

Despite its recent demise and its significantly jaded prominence in the conceptual pantheon of the social sciences, the construct of values remains one of most powerful and promising candidates for a project of consilience. To substantiate this claim, the following section will briefly illuminate what values are, how they are acquired,

sustained and/or changed as well as try to show that values form personal and social value-belief complexes. It is their properties as experientially-reactive recording systems that make them conceptually so valuable.

The Nature of Values

Allport (1961) called values the “dominating force in life” (543). Values constitute “enduring belief[s] that a specific mode of conduct or endstate of existence is personally or socially preferable to an opposite or converse mode” (Rokeach 1973:4). They reflect and mirror a “conception, explicit or implicit, distinctive of an individual or characteristic of a group, of the desirable that influences the selection from the available modes, means, and ends of action” (Kluckhohn 1951:395). As “criteria, or standards” (Williams 1968:283) or “conceptions of the desirable” (Schwartz 1999:24) as well as the “desired” (Rohan 2000), these abstract meaning-making structures constitute “transsituational goals, varying in importance, that serve as guiding principles in the life or a person or a social entity” (Schwartz 1994:21). In other words, values not only give “expression to human needs” (Rokeach 1973) but also fulfill a range of other roles for the individual (as well as collective). Values, however, do more than simply providing standards for evaluation and serving as experiential guides. Values “structure our experiences” (Hitlin and Piliavin 2004:363), induce “valences” (Feather 1992), shape perceptions of reality (Allport 1955), order beliefs, attitudes as well as experiences, fulfill self maintenance and enhancement functions⁸⁹ (Rokeach 1973) and provide narrative heuristics for post-hoc rationalization processes (e.g. in the case of justifying

⁸⁹ An alternative terminology would be: “ego-defensive roles”.

prejudicial attitudes and discrimination toward intergroup (Kristiansen and Zanna 1994)). Hitlin and Piliavin (2004), however, stress that while values “have both motivational and normative qualities” (379), they are also historically and culturally variable in content and thus remind us that “[s]ociologists must not reify historically variable phenomena as timeless human characteristics” (360).

Since values can be viewed as “organized summaries of experience” – narrative scripts – that are meant to provide “continuity and meaning under changing environmental circumstances” (Feather 1980:249), they often act as “latent guides” that themselves do not require much reflection (Feather 1995). Values – as a form of experience condensers – thus help to synthesize a range of affective and cognitive elements encountered in social life (Marini 2000:2828). Values *capture* realities more than they merely describe them. This is a key insight because much of human action occurs without much thought” and involves merely “habitual actions, the routine use of heuristics, and other relatively automatic forms of behavior” (Feather 1992:122) – a fact corroborated by neuroscientists who argue that 80-95% of the mind involves preconscious or unconscious phenomena (Kandel 2007). This means that while people may not be aware of their own values (Hechter 1993), they often act in close agreement with them (Hitlin 2003). This standby logic of the mind becomes magnified by the fact that values tend to act as “cultural truisms” – “beliefs that are widely shared and rarely questioned” by the individual. Empirical research thus frequently shows that individuals often have little cognitive support for values – except for those that have become tightly integrated in the experientially-anchored self-concept (Maio and Olson 1998). Hofstede

(2001) – loosely following Kluckhohn (1951) – thus argues that in a simplified way values monumentalize “a broad tendency to prefer certain states of affairs over others”(5). Values acts like “feelings with arrows to them: Each has a plus and minus pole” (6). While core values strongly impact social perception, thought patterns and social behavior, they can – at times - be temporally suspended or overpowered by situational pressures (Bardi and Schwartz 2003). Understanding the compensatory mechanisms that ensue from such a situational assault, therefore, constitutes an important research domain.

Value Acquisition, Value Activation and Value Change

Values are said to be acquired in the moral abstract early on in life, though, as Rokeach (1973) rightly points out “[v]ariations in personal, societal, and cultural experience will not only generate individual differences in value systems but also individual differences in their stability” (11). The acquisition of values and the formation of integrated personal value systems are thus inherently tied to the structural availability of certain ideational narratives (Maio, Olson, Bernard, and Luke 2003). Certain structural arrangements – as the early founding fathers of authoritarianism have so forcefully argued (Adorno, Frenkel-Brunswik, Levinson, and Sanford 1950; Fromm 1929/1984; Fromm 1941) – can sway individuals to adopt particular value-belief systems (and thus assume different value priorities).

Value transmission is often thought to be tied to intergenerational dynamics – though the actual processes seem rather complex. Gecas and Seff (1990), for example, suggest three major avenues by which parents shape the values of their children:

parental behaviors/childrearing practices, perceptions of value similarity or occupational/social class influences – through this value transfer may not necessarily be unidirectional but can at times be bidirectional (Pinquart and Silbereisen 2004). Broad values, however – especially those related to political or religious orientations – are probably to a large degree transmitted from parents to children. Recent studies, for example, have suggested that parents with highly authoritarian parenting styles tend to have children with value profiles either very similar *or* dissimilar to them. Children from low right-wing authoritarian parents, in contrast, seem to mirror the values of their parents (Rohan and Zanna 1996) possibly due to “greater responsiveness as parents to their children’s needs” (293). While some have suggested that parental preferences toward obedience and conformity are declining (see, for example, Lederer 1982), recent replications of Milgrim’s studies seem to dampen too much optimism (Blass 2000; Twenge 2009).

Value transmission in families – while important – is contingent upon the nature of structural conditions. Religious location and structural commitment often create a bi-directional flow between an individuals’ religiosity and their values. Valuing certainty, self-restraint and submission to authority inclines people to be more religious (Schwartz and Huisman 1995) while religious activities reinforce these values. Moreover, different racial groups, for example, place different priorities on values such as equality. While black parents put the value second on their list of value priorities, white parents place it 11th (Hitlin and Piliavin 2004). Parents from more disadvantaged social groups not only tend to teach their children to be more conformist (and thus adopt prosystemic values)

but their parenting styles also tend to lead to less intellectual flexibility and self-direction (Kohn 1977). Gender socialization and the cultural distribution of gender roles in a country also seems to affect to what degree women will adopt more intrinsic and social values (Hitlin and Piliavin 2004; Hofstede 2001). Reference group dynamics with respect to work environments (Tavris 1993) or peers (Alwin, Cohen, and Newcomb 1991; Alwin 1990) affect value transmission and value maintenance in important ways as well. In other words, value transmission is inherently tied with the nature of the social environment in which an individual grows up and lives. The acquisition and maintenance of “authoritarian” values and beliefs, in particular, seems linked to important developmental milestones. Browning (1983), for example, demonstrated that the subtle relationship between ego development⁹⁰ and value-expressive authoritarian attitudes (and values) can be plotted in stage-patterns. Children in the conscientious stage (higher stage) – on average – seem consistently less authoritarian than those in the conformist stage (lower stage). This suggests that authoritarianism is more tied to social environments that hamper the child’s development rather than conformist tendencies per se (also see Oesterreich 2005 who advances a similar argument).

Core values once acquired tend to remain fairly stable over time (see Kristiansen and Hotte 1996) – a phenomenon thought to be linked to their crystallization early in life (Inglehart and Flanagan 1987; Kohn 1977). Changes do occur, however, and are often related to changes in social environment or changes in social roles. This explains,

⁹⁰ Jane Loevinger's conception of ego development (Loevinger, 1966, 1979) constitutes an influential approach to the study of developmental aspects of social and moral attitudes. She postulates a “hierarchical” continuum of ego development (independent of age) from the impulsive, self-protective, ritual-traditionalistic, conformist, self-aware, conscientious, individualistic, autonomous the integrated stage.

for example, why younger individuals tend to value self-direction and stimulation more (Schwartz 1992; Schwartz and Bardi 2001) or why older people – especially when they have become parents – often become more conservative (Altemeyer 1988)⁹¹. Systematic changes in value structure have also been documented in women. While middle-aged women tend to have a stronger inclination toward instrumental values, older women often espouse terminal values (Ryff 1979) – though historical cohort memberships may mediate these affects (McBroom, Reed, Burns, Hargraves, and Trankel 1985). Changes in social environments – as the case of immigrant families demonstrates – also indicate the existence of intergenerational value differences especially in domains such “conservation” and “openness” (Roccas, Sagiv, Schwartz, and Knafo 2002). To Feather (1979) this suggests that cultural assimilation (a change in value-belief matrices), in fact, constitutes a rearrangement of value structures. This seems especially feasible since value changes are often tied to changes in reference groups that shape value maintenance processes (Rokeach 1973).

Finally, values, as reflections of experience can also change due to life-altering events such as trauma or reflect the degree to which value-belief systems inoculate individuals against value challenges. With respect to the latter, Bernard and collaborators’ (2003) work, for example, suggests that cognitive defenses can help vaccinate values against attacks. This hints that structural-ideational matrices that induce recurrent value activation processes (e.g. via threat amplification processes such

⁹¹ For an alternative view see McCrae et al. (2000) who argue that observed changes in “traits” reflect primarily the “natural progressions of personality development that occur without regard to cultural and historical context” (182).

as the priming of core beliefs that the world is a dangerous place) may be able to create conditions that prevent value change (and thus create individual patterns more conducive to a “closed mind”). Schwartz and Bardi (1997) thus argue that value formation and change reflect a series of adaptive processes in which personal value systems slowly become attuned to the social value systems of the salient structural arrangements. Changes in one value – due to the interconnectedness of value systems and the logic of value tensions – often reverberate and lead to increases in importance in compatible values and decreases in conflicting values (Bardi, Lee, Hofmann-Towfigh, and Soutar 2009). This means that value changes only reflect a relative “reordering of priorities” while the total value system seem to remain fairly stable over time (Rokeach 1973; Schwartz 1992).

Value-Belief Systems

Values and beliefs never exist in isolation but are incorporated into ideational complexes (Rokeach 1973). Ideational complexes – as conceived here – represent value-belief narratives at different levels of abstraction that merge core beliefs with desirable end states *within* a system of *particular* value priorities. In a similar vein, others define ideologies – a form of value-belief system – as nonconscious and conscious “systems of attitudes and values that are organized around an abstract theme” (Maio and Olson 2000:284), “value-laden constructions people use in or after their decision making” (Rohan 2000:267) or as “a more or less institutionalized set of beliefs [and values]” (Rokeach 1973:35). As “schemata of comprehensibility” (Allport 1961:544) ideologies and religious dogmas, however, can also be seen as special manifestations of value-

belief systems – with the former tapping into highly politicized status-quo justifying narratives while the latter advances more a religious nomos. Value-belief systems also intersect with worldviews which reflect “people’s conscious beliefs about the world” (Rohan 2000:267). To avoid confusion (and this conceptual distinction is by no means perfect but serves the purpose for now), worldviews should be seen as the belief part of value-belief systems that shape, and are being shaped by their twin moon: value-systems. Often centering around a *particular* choreography of core beliefs about the nature of reality and the goodness of human beings (Tomkins 1995), worldviews (or the core beliefs that they contain and organize them) thus cannot and should not be divorced from value-belief systems. Unlike other conceptions (Duckitt 2009; Rohan 2000), worldview here is thus not conceived as a mediating force but rather as an interactive component of the value-belief system (beliefs about the nature of reality shape as much the adoption of values as values shape and help organize beliefs).

Select Value Taxonomies

While most professional (and hobby) axiologists agree that value–belief systems operate at the personal *and* collective level, a closer look at some of the more influential conceptual and empirical attempts raises, however, serious concerns as to actual realities of this claim (also see Table 1). Milton Rokeach’s work on instrumental and terminal values (Rokeach 1968; Rokeach 1973), Ronald Inglehart’s explorations into materialist and postmaterialist values (Inglehart 1977; Inglehart 1990; Inglehart and Flanagan 1987) as well as Shalom Schwartz’s cross-cultural work on value types (Schwartz 1994; Schwartz and Bardi 2001; Schwartz and Bilsky 1987), for example,

implicitly or explicitly build on Maslow's work on human motivation (especially on his work on human needs). Maslow's intellectual influence shows because these authors seem to spend a disproportionate amount of time conceptualizing and measuring *personal value systems*. While the Schwartz and Inglehart (at least indirectly) addressed collective values, Rokeach's work – which focused on the relative ranking of individual values – could be seen as exclusively dealing with the personal value system.

Unlike Rokeach, Inglehart (1977; 1990) postulated a cohort-based shift from materialist to postmaterialist values in Western societies (see Table 1). He tied his theory of value change – more closely than the other two – to Maslow's logic of a hierarchical need structure that gets primed depending on the nature of the social environment. Inglehart, for example, argued that under conditions of scarcity people - who generally desire freedom and autonomy – will prioritize material needs such as hunger, thirst and physical security and thus be more prone to

Table 1: An Illustrative Selection of Influential Value Taxonomies

Cluckhohn and Strodtbeck's (1961) Value Orientations	Rokeach's (1973) Instrumental vs. Terminal Values	Inglehart (1971) Materialist vs. Postmaterialist Values	Schwartz's (1992) Value Types	Hofstede's (2001) Dimensions of Culture	House et al.'s (2004) Cultural Dimensions
view of human nature (evil, mixed, good)	instrumental values ambitious capable courageous self-controlled clean obedient polite responsible honest forgiving helpful cheerful imaginative independent logical intellectual loving broadminded	materialist values <i>economic and physical security</i> <i>(e.g. wealth, support for strong leadership, law and order, strong in-group pride)</i> postmaterialist values <i>autonomy and self expression</i> <i>(e.g. belonging, esteem, aesthetic, and intellectual satisfaction)</i>	openness to change hedonism stimulation self-direction self-transcendence universalism benevolence. conservation tradition conformity security self-enhancement power achievement	uncertainty avoidance (a society's tolerance for uncertainty and ambiguity) individualism vs. collectivism (degree of social integration of the individual) masculinity vs. femininity (distribution of gender roles within society) long vs. short-term orientation (thrift and perseverance versus respect for tradition and social obligations) power distance (degree of institutional acceptance of power inequalities)	performance orientation (encouragement and reward of innovation and excellence) uncertainty avoidance (use of social norms, rules, and procedures to deal with future unpredictability) humane orientation (fairness, altruism, friendliness, generosity, and kindness) institutional collectivism (collective distribution of resources and actions) in-group collectivism (degree to which individuals prefer social cohesion) assertiveness (individual assertiveness in social relationships) gender egalitarianism (existence of gender inequalities) future orientation (encouragement of future-oriented behaviors) power distance (acceptance of authority, power differences and status privileges)
relationship to environment (subjugation, harmony, mastery)					
orientation in time (toward past, present, future)					
orientation toward activity (being, being in becoming, doing)					
nature of relationships among people (lineality, collaterality, individualism)	terminal values a comfortable life family security national security salvation social recognition sense of accomplishment true friendship pleasure an exciting life self-respect a world of peace a world of beauty freedom happiness equality inner harmony mature love wisdom				

adopt materialist values. In his rendition *material values* stress economic and physical security and thus encompass preferences for material acquisition, endorsement for more authoritarian leadership, law and order, a strong army for defense and an enhanced ingroup pride. With the post-world war increase in wealth and prosperity (in industrialized countries), age cohorts socialized into social environments of relative material abundance shifted their value priorities toward self-actualization and thus begun to endorse more *postmaterialist values*. Postmaterialist values, for Inglehart, capture the desire for individual improvement, personal freedom, democratic decision-making models, humanist ideals or a clean and healthy environment. Tying value transmission to early childhood socialization patterns, he argued that these value orientations remain fairly stable for the cohorts across the life course. While Inglehart theoretically conceived value priorities as an emergent property of the economic, political and social realities of the social environment, his empirical explorations seemed to largely fail to clearly separate collective value dynamics from personal value dynamics. His forced-choice value inventories tend to explore primarily *individual* preferences with respect to social cohesion versus self-direction or personal versus collective security, certainty and ambiguity or authority relations (hierarchical versus democratic patterns). The nature of these values has led some to suggest that materialist values in fact reflect authoritarian values while postmaterialist values tap more into liberal or libertarian values (see S. Flanagan in Inglehart and Flanagan 1987).

In contrast to the previous accounts, Schwartz (1996)– who built strongly on Rokeach’s insights – postulates three “universal requirements of human existence:

biological needs, requisites for coordinated social interaction, and demands of group survival and functioning” (2). Unlike his intellectual inspiration, however, he rejects the empirical usefulness of the instrumental-terminal value dichotomy and proposes a circumplex model of ten value types – which steeped into a logic of value tensions – is said to help better explain how people and groups differ in terms of their dynamic organization of value priorities (Rohan 2000). Adjacent value types, for example, are conceived as being much more likely to coexist in value systems than value types that are opposite on that value circle. Roccas (2002), however, has cast some doubt on the universality on this claim and argued that values that are considered motivationally nonadjacent (e.g. conformity and achievement) can occasionally blend in individuals. While Schwartz acknowledges the existence of individual and collective values, his actual model (Schwartz 1994; Schwartz and Boehnke 2004), seems to include mixed-level constructs with power, achievement and hedonism mainly conceived in terms of individual criteria (e.g. *power* as an individual’s quest for social status and prestige and control or dominance over people and resources, *achievement* in terms of personal success through demonstrating competence according to social standards or hedonism in terms of pleasure and sensuous gratification for oneself). Value types most relevant to authoritarian phenomena, on the other hand, are conceived in a more abstract fashion (e.g. *tradition* in terms of respect, commitment, and acceptance of the customs and ideas that traditional culture or religion provide; conformity in terms of restraints on actions, inclinations, and impulses that are likely to upset or harm others or violate social expectations or norms; as well as security in terms of safety, harmony, and

stability of society, of relationships, and of self). Despite the more inclusive nature of the latter value constructs, his value types still seem to obfuscate levels of structural complexity. His claim that value structures are universal thus could be seen as a “reversed ecological fallacy” (Hofstede 2001) in which individual phenomena are being imposed onto cultural phenomena (which operate at different levels of structural complexity).

In contrast to the previous scholars, Hofstede (2001) more strongly revisits earlier anthropological approaches to the study of values (see Inkeles and Levinson 1954/1969) by arguing that “dimensions of culture” essentially reflect “fundamental problems of societies”. While his five value dimensions (Hofstede 2001:29) of *power distance* (“related to the different solutions to the basic problem of human inequality”), *uncertainty avoidance* (“related to the level of stress in a society in the face of an unknown future”), *individualism versus collectivism* (“related to the integration of individuals into primary groups”), *masculinity and femininity* (“related to the division of emotional roles between man and women”) and *long-term versus short-term orientation* (“related to the choice of focus for people’s efforts with respect to the future or the present”) manage to capture collective dimensions of value-belief systems at the cultural (and/or societal level) – they still fail to clearly differentiate value-belief systems at different structural levels. Despite his “theoretical” acknowledgement that “human mental programming” (or “software of the mind”) exist at different “levels” – at the *individual* (unique to the individual), the *collective* (shared, learned and unique to a social category) and the *universal* (“biological operating system” of the human body)

level – which acknowledges structural diversity, he – somewhat contradictorily – argues that in studying values “we compare individuals”; in studying culture “we compare societies” (15). Nevertheless, his typology includes important value dimensions that may potentially help to capture collective dimensions of the authoritarian phenomena (e.g. social environments characterized by high levels of power distance, collectivism and/or masculinity).

Another important contemporary attempt to capture collective dimensions of value-belief systems comes from a recent work on “societal cultures” by House et al. (2004)⁹². The authors build on Hofstede but proposed nine “cultural dimensions”: performance orientation, uncertainty avoidance, human orientation, institutional collectivism, in-group collectivism, assertiveness, gender egalitarianism, future orientation and power distance. While some of these dimensions – at least implicitly – seem to traverse levels of structural complexity (e.g. the authors conceive *uncertainty avoidance* as “the extent to which a society, organization, or group relies on social norms, rules, and procedures to alleviate the unpredictability of future events” (30)), much of the work mainly seems to tap into the values of the societal level. Nevertheless, a number of these “cultural dimensions” – like those of Hofstede’s taxonomy – could become potentially useful in tackling authoritarian phenomena (especially if they could integrate the more individualist notions of value systems). Viewed from the position of

⁹² Following anthropological approaches, the authors studied “cultures” not in terms of “nations” but with respect to cultural regions (e.g. English-speaking Canada or Black South Africa). Having grouped the 62 societies into ten “societal clusters” (Anglo – 7, Latin Europe – 6, Nordic Europe – 3, Germanic Europe – 5, Eastern Europe – 8, Latin America – 10, Sub-Saharan Africa – 5, Middle East – 5, Southern Asia – 6, Confucian Asia – 6), the authors – among other things – also made a distinction between practices (as is) and values (as should be) ... especially with respect to leadership attributes.

cultural dimensions, for example, social environment characterized by high levels of uncertainty avoidance, institutional collectivism, in-group collectivism, assertiveness, power distance and low gender egalitarianism should be particularly conducive to the development of authoritarian tendencies.

Comparing these different conceptualizations of value systems (including those like Kluckhohn (1951)'s value orientations that incorporate belief components into the taxonomy), what stands out are a number of consistencies that exist across these different approaches. It seems, for example, that in one way or another all of these conceptual approaches tackle issues of personal autonomy versus the need for social conformity, the desirability of resources allocation, intergroup relations as well as rights and obligations (equal versus hierarchical), and the relative desirability of social change versus social stability (see Hitlin and Piliavin 2004). While a stronger theory integration would depend on a more consistent formulation of the value types, domains or orientations, this could open new and fascinating opportunities for authoritarian research. Major measures of authoritarian phenomena (like the SDO or RWA) are not only believed to capture core beliefs and social attitudes expressive of motivationally-based higher-order sociocultural values but some possible empirical evidence for this already exists. Altemeyer (1981)'s RWA, for example, has been shown to correlate with conservation or conservatism values (such as tradition, social conformity, cohesion, social harmony) while the SDO has association with values tapping into power relations, dominance, hierarchy, and inequality in society (Duckitt 2009). Hence, what is needed is a more rigorous conceptualization of value beliefs systems that equally applies to

personal and collective dynamics. A closer theoretical integration of existing taxonomies – an integration that manages to pay closer attention to structural contingencies – would be a welcome innovation in that respect.

Personal and Collective Value-Belief Systems: An Attempted Re-Definition

The conceptual ambiguity with respect to the standing of individual and collective value-belief systems that permeates much of the literature on values (and to lesser degrees on beliefs) constitutes a profound challenge to theory integration. So, how can this problem be solved? Classic symbolic interactionist work on values (see Vernon 1973) and earlier research related attribution processes (see Schachter and Singer 1962) point to a partial solution. These traditions argue that individuals do not simply act upon internal biological stimuli but that humans learn – via social interactional dynamics – to link *available* cognitive labels (e.g. values, symbols, cultural scripts, narratives) to physiological processes. Vernon (1973), for example, rightly argues that values emerge within an interactional process in which collective “decisions” (we – whoever that “we” is – decide what is good) are transformed into collective “is-good” (or is-desirable) statements. These decisions (value definitions) not only rely upon authority as a means of legitimacy (and thus are inherently related to structural factors) but the conversion of value definitions into values reflects an “effort to establish and/or maintain harmonious [social] interaction by providing motive language (symbols) with which to justify ... decision[s]” (131). Values, at one level, thus reflect aspects of the *collective* memory: pre-manufactured scripts that not only help individuals make sense

of their own *embodied* experiences but also capture specific experiential realities of the collective.

Rohan (2000) recently reminded the academic community to make a stricter distinction between “personal, social and cultural value systems”. Defining personal and social value systems as “intrapsychic value systems” – with the former reflecting “judgments of the capacity of entities to enable best possible living” and the latter “people’s perceptions of others’ judgments about best possible living or functioning, that is, others’ (e.g., other people, groups, institutions, cultures) value priorities” (265) – constitutes a step into the right direction. Arguing that groups have “ideological value systems”, however, is problematic because it conceptually separates the *prototypical* value-belief system of the group (what the group stands for in the *abstract*) from the intrapsychic imprint (the “social value system”) of the individual. While the social value system probably reflects an adulterated version of the prototypical value-belief system (e.g. interpretative processes of the individual may alter the group-based value-belief ideal), there is probably also a *substantial overlap* between the internalized representations of the value-belief prototype and the actual group prototype. Put differently, it may be theoretically more useful to reserve the term *personal value-belief systems* to refer to “organized summaries” of *individual* experience⁹³ and *social or collective value-belief systems* for “organized summaries” of experiences of the collectivity. This means, of course, that each structural arrangement (e.g. a group, an institution, an organization, a society) does embody – at least in the abstract – a

⁹³ This represents a loose adaptation of Feather’s (1992) definition of values as “organized summaries of experience”.

particular ideatype value-belief system though mutual value-belief system reinforcement or the permeation of certain values across the structural landscape should be expected.

This conceptual separation – while not necessarily new – helps to partially disentangle how individual factors, structural and ideational factors may intertwine. While personal and social correlates of the different social value systems coexist within the individual mind, the two value-belief systems also thrive in a continuous interactive embrace. Our daily engagement with various social value systems, for example can lead over time to value drifts that realign the core of the more permanent and semi-crystallized aspects of the personal value system. At the same time, however, the degree to which value priority changes can occur not only depends on the perceived value fit between personal and social value systems but also on the actual biological value affinities staked out by the neural networks of the individual. Individual factors in authoritarian phenomena – to briefly return to the major topic of the dissertation - thus reflect an active biosocial cauldron of personal value-belief predisposition *and* social value-belief contingencies (more on this in chapter 6). This also means that value-belief systems wed particular beliefs about the nature of reality to particular values priorities (Rohan 2000) – though the nature of core beliefs shape values as much as values shape them. In short, value-belief systems are meaning structures expressive of emotive and cognitive elements that form a fossil record of individual as well as collective experiences. At the individual level, they encapsulate and make salient unique human needs, express “personality traits”, enshrine core beliefs about the nature of reality and

compress a series of different life experiences into one small manageable experiential label. At the collective level, on the other hand, value-belief systems not only represent pre-manufactured narratives peculiar to certain structural or ideational realities but also constitute a time-lapse of collective experiences.

In sum, personal and collective value-belief systems – to a large degree – should be conceived along the same set of value dimensions. While certain dimensions may take on more importance for collective entities than for individual actors, it is always individuals – whether they act as an agent or a social actor who enacts a social script – that endorse and act upon values and beliefs. Put simply, this means that dynamics related to structure-agency, micro-macro or ideo-structural interactions all meet in the soothing diplomacy of some sort of value-belief Esperanto. A possible integration of existing value hierarchies along higher-order constructs – as some have suggested – may be a good start for such an ambitious endeavor. Prime candidates for values could be found in Schwartz (1992)'s work on value domains: *openness to change versus conservation* (which could capture individual *and* collective approaches to uncertainty, social order and social conformity) and *self-enhancement versus self-transcendence* (which relates to the tensions between the individual and the social self) or work in political psychology that phrase value-tensions – at least implicitly – in terms of the continuum between “compassion versus competition” and “moral regulation versus individual freedom” (see Maio, Olson, Bernard, and Luke 2003).

Tackling Complexity

An Appropriation of Weber's Elective Affinities

Ok, so how on earth does Max Weber fit into the discussion of value-belief systems, and even more to the understanding of authoritarian phenomena? While the following section cannot provide a comprehensive answer to these complex questions, it will try to provide a brief rationale for the conceptual usefulness of the Weber's "elective affinities".

Stark (1958) – in his *"Sociology of Knowledge"*, for example, argued that "elective affinities" constituted Weber's theoretical alternative to the "mechanistic causalism and quasi-organological functionalism" of his time. The term itself entered Weber's theoretical vocabulary via 18th century chemistry⁹⁴, Kant's ideas of pure reason (which Kant himself termed "affinity") and Goethe's short novel "Elective Affinities" (Howe 1978; Jost, Federico, and Napier 2009; Thomas 1985). While Weber - as Howe (1985) has convincingly demonstrated – has used the term in a diverse and often informal fashion, he seemed fascinated by the analytical and conceptual utility of the idea. The first usage of this concept probably goes back to his 1904 essay *"The Objectivity of Social Scientific and Social Political Insights"* (Weber 1904). He further elaborates on it in the *"Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism"* (Weber 1905) in which he tries to explain the interactive nature "between the material bases, the forms of social and political organization, and the intellectual and spiritual contents of the cultural epochs of the Reformation" and thus how the "religious movement [Calvinism]

⁹⁴ The best formulation of the theory – which described the transmutation of elements – probably goes back to Torborn Bergman's (1775) *De Attractionibus Electivis*

affected the development of the material culture [capitalism]" (1905:54). In a lesser known work, "*The Parliament and Administration in Reconstructed Germany*" (Weber 1918), he wrote that there exists an "elective affinity of [the Center party's] authoritarian mentality with the authoritarian state" (1918:76)⁹⁵. In "*Economy and Society*" (Weber 1922) he then further applies the term to describe the relationship between "religiously demanded life-style[s] with ... socially conditioned life-style[s]" (1922:796) and "structural principles of the early Protestant sects with the structure of democracy" (1922:815).

While Weber never formally developed the concept, the few examples illustrate that he saw a strong analytical potential in this Neo-Kantian framework. Focusing on the "intersections of meanings", the concept was meant to elucidate how an intricate interaction between social, economic, psychological, biological, political and ideational factors can – in concert – shape human action. As Howe (1978) put it: "The actors' choices of possible actions are given by the elective affinities of their universe of meanings." (383). In other words, Weber successfully managed to sidestep the question of causal chains and challenge the gold standard of reductionist science with a more interactive "web of meanings". Recognizing the complexity of social reality, he also realized that structure-agency integration and the reconciliation of diverse experiential phenomena would only be possible by meeting complexity *with* complexity. Implicit in Weber's writing is the notion that elective affinities involve directly or indirectly

⁹⁵ By trying to link "authoritarian mentality" (a personality trait) with the "authoritarian state" (a structural phenomena), Weber incidentally provided one of the earliest "contributions" for authoritarian research.

value/belief affinities (this is especially clear in his work on the Protestant Ethics and his cross-cultural work on religions).

Having demonstrated at length apparent “elective affinities” among individual, structural and ideational factors in authoritarian phenomena and having shown that a make-shift value-belief system Esperanto can be developed, it seems the time has come to ring in the final round of theory building. Using important insights from social identity and structural symbolic interaction, chapter 6 will therefore try to show how affinities are created, sustained and changed – in situ – via demonstrating how value-belief system can be linked to self dynamics.

Part II: Value-Belief Systems and Self Dynamics

Many brilliant treatises have been written about the self and identity (see, for example, Deaux 1992; Ellemers, Spears, and Doosje 2002; Gecas and Burke 1995; Giddens 1991; Leary and Tangney 2005) and this dissertation is certainly not the place to develop a new and full-fledged conception of these concepts. Since the term “self” and/or “identity”, however, conjures up even more widely diverging meanings than other constructs discussed in this chapter, it seems necessary to briefly define and delineate the contours of how the constructs are intended to be used here. Stryker and Burke (2000), for example, argue that there are basically three major approaches to the understanding of “identity” (a term which sometimes is being used to denote aspects of the self and/or – in more Meadian renditions – to equate it). One school of thought, for example, sees an identity simply as the “culture of people” (see Calhoun 1994). Other conceptual traditions conceive identity more in terms of identification with social categories. This view is mainly associated with social identity theorists (see Tajfel and Turner 1979a; Tajfel 1979; Tajfel 1981; Turner and Brown 1978) or scholarship on collective identities (see Melucci 1995; Snow and Oliver 1995). A third influential conception is entertained by various schools of identity theory which – in their earlier formulations – mainly studied role and situational identities (see Burke 1980; Burke and Reitzes 1991; Stryker 1980). In short: Identities and selves “emerge in social process, reflect social process, social values, and social structure, and function to contribute to the maintenance, and sometimes change, in social structure” (Cote and Levine 2002:36).

Despite the subtle differences that various school advance, all seem to agree that identities involve “self-characterizations individuals make in terms of the structural features of group memberships, such as various social roles, memberships, and categories...and to the various character traits an individual displays and others attribute to an actor on the basis of his/her conduct” (Gecas and Burke 1995:42). These interactional realities are captured by the sociological truism that social structure shapes identity (downstream process) while at the same time personal identities are (often) drawn toward structural arrangements (upstream process) that cater best to the subjective needs and understandings. Hence, it should come as no surprise that scholars of authoritarianism, prejudice and/or intergroup relations – especially over the past few decades (see, for example, Duckitt 1989; Duckitt 2001; Sidanius, Pratto, and Bobo 1994; Sidanius, Pratto, van Laar, and Levin 2004) – have often employed insights of identity theory. Since most scholars in these fields, however, have drawn disproportionately on themes from social identity theory, the following sections – after a short introduction of social identity theory and identity theory – will attempt an eclectic (and by no means complete) synthesis of important aspects of both theoretical traditions. The section will try to show how an integrative theoretical framework may not only help to better tackle issues of group salience, group affiliation with particular groups and/or threat dynamics but also provide a conceptual vantage point to understand (at least partially) elective affinities between individual, structural and ideational factors of authoritarian phenomena.

Social Identity Theory (SIT): The Concept of Group Prototypicality

Social identity theory – which grew out of a theoretical critique of an “overly individualistic, reductionist and asocial mainstream, largely American, social psychology” in the 1970s (Hogg and Williams (Hogg and Williams 2000:81) – actually represents an umbrella term for two conceptually complementary theoretical mutations: social identity theory (e.g. Tajfel 1979; Tajfel 1981) and self-categorization theory (e.g. Turner and Brown 1978; Turner 1985). SIT advances a powerful theory of group processes and intergroup relations that especially stresses themes such as differential categorization processes, in-group conformity, out-group aggression, depersonalization dynamics and the concept of *prototypicality* (Abrams and Hogg 2004; Hornsey 2008). Especially, the latter – the concept of prototypicality – seems to pull many of the theoretical assumptions of the tradition together.

Tajfel’s work on social identity – which builds on but extends Leon Festinger’s work on social comparisons (Festinger 1954) – developed largely out of experimental work on the “minimal group paradigm (Tajfel, Billig, Bundy, and Flament 1971). In his early work, Tajfel (1982) conceived of human interaction as a continuum from interpersonal to intergroup relations in which the nature of interaction (interpersonal versus intergroup) primes differential self dynamics. While interpersonal situations induce personal identity processes which involve “attitudes, memories, behaviors, and emotions that define them as idiosyncratic individuals”, intergroup contexts – in

contrast – tend to activate social identities⁹⁶ that derive from the social categories to which an individual “belongs, as well as the emotional and evaluative consequences of this group membership” (Hornsey 2008:206). Viewing intergroup behavior – to a large degree – as a process of competition for positive identity, he argued that intergroup relations lead to situations in which the social identity overpowers aspects of the personal identity (and thus the latter becomes less important). Thus the quest “to protect or enhance positive distinctiveness and positive social identity” (Hogg and Williams 2000:87) leads to differential accentuation effects (captured by a so-called meta-contrast ratio principle) “in which intracategory [...] and intercategory differences among stimuli are accentuated on dimensions believed to be correlated with the categorization” (Hogg and Williams 2000:86). Put differently, this means that ingroup members slowly come to be seen as more alike while those in the outgroup will appear more different. Accentuation processes are said to be related to salience processes and status dynamics (Abrams and Hogg 1988; Tajfel and Turner 1979b) – though salience often seems to be *assumed rather than demonstrated*. The postulation of situationally-driven status enhancement processes (which contribute to the experience of a positive social self), on the other hand, often echo insights from cognitive dissonance theory (see Aronson 1992; Brehm and Cohen 1962; Cooper 2007; Festinger 1957) in that they emphasize the importance of (1) downward intergroup comparisons, (2) devaluing negative aspects of the ingroup or (3) contestation of intergroup status hierarchies (see Hornsey 2008).

⁹⁶ Social identity theory acknowledges the existence subgroup identities or cross-cutting identities (Hornsey and Hogg 2000; Hornsey 2008).

In contrast, Turner – Tajfel’s student – advances a self categorization theory (SCT) that refines aspects of Taifel’s SIT by elaborating on the cognitive aspects of the theory as well as by shifting more strongly from intergroup to intragroup processes (Hornsey 2008). Turner (1985), for example, argued that identity activation constitutes a functional outcome of the *perceived* comparative and normative fit (meta-contrast ratio principle). While identity accessibility (contextual versus chronic) and “functional antagonisms” among levels of identity inclusiveness (e.g. between universal, social versus personal identities) can mediate the process, he maintained that accentuation leads to a “process of depersonalization”. Depersonalization refers to a situation in which salient group memberships (salient social identities) entice individuals to see themselves and other members in terms of *group prototypicality* (which captures the perceived idealtype group identity in terms of attitudes, emotions and behaviors). For Turner, these depersonalization processes not only shape group cohesion, conformity and acceptance of particular leadership styles but also the nature of intergroup beliefs and intergroup interactions. While SCT accepts the fluidity and contextuality of the *content* of social categories it argues that stereotypes (category content) are not mere cognitive simplifications but *functional properties* of the group legitimization process. In short, SCT provides an interesting way of looking at issues of social influence and conformity – dynamics in which normative pressures relate to issues of prototypicality. While much of the theory remains speculative, the tradition has produced a large body of experimental work that has provided a fair amount of empirical support. It has been shown, for example, that high levels of salience and/or group identification tend to

accentuate the perceptions of ingroup homogeneity and increase processes of stereotyping⁹⁷. SCT concedes, however, that accentuation processes are subject to situational, historical and normative pressures (e.g. Turner 1991).

In short, both early versions of SIT *and* SCT provide complementary insights with respect to salient group membership and the emergence of ethnocentrism, in-group bias, intergroup discrimination, conformity, stereotyping or group cohesion. Both theoretical traditions acknowledge that the particular strategy used for the enhancement of the social identity depends on the nature of “*social belief structures*”. These “belief structures” are conceived as “internalized representations of societal-level belief systems and ideologies” concerning (a) the relative status of groups, (b) the stability of the status relations, (c) the legitimacy of the status relations, and (d) the permeability of intergroup boundaries and thus the possibility of psychologically leaving one group to become member of another group (Hogg and Williams 2000:87). Despite the acknowledgement that desires for personal distinctiveness, group belonging, and self-enhancement can mediate these processes (e.g. Hornsey and Jetten 2004), SIT with its primary emphasis on prototypicality, social conformity and depersonalization in intergroup settings often fails to clearly show how salience of these social identities is created in the first place, why the personal self gets situationally decoupled or overpowered, why this seems to involve substantially different processes in insecure and secure selves or how salience precisely relates to the nature of “social belief

⁹⁷ The process of ingroup-outgroup accentuation seems to represent two types of stereotyping – one with respect to the ingroup (in Hofstede’s (2001) terminology “autostereotypes”) and one with respect to outgroups (in Hofstede’s terminology “heterostereotypes”).

structures". This is where structural symbolic interactionism (identity theory) may come to the rescue.

Identity Theory (IT): The Conceptual Beauty of Identity Standards

Identity theories seem to constitute a form of structural symbolic interactionism that trace their intellectual genealogy to the work of (among others) George Herbert Mead, John Dewey and William James. Within the large pantheon of constructivist creativity, two traditions seem to have left their particular mark in this field. On the one hand there is Sheldon Stryker's brilliant work which – in its original formulations – primarily tried to detail structural sources for identity dynamics and focused on how the self shapes and is shaped by social-structural arrangements (e.g. Stryker 1980). The other, more cognitive approach, eloquently focuses more on how internal identity processes shape social behavior (e.g. Burke and Reitzes 1991).

Viewing the self as inherently multifaceted, Stryker (1980) in his original work, for example, argued that social identities constitute "internalized role expectations" that come with structural positions that individuals occupy. Movement within or across the structural matrix – either by choice or by forced circumstances, including normal life course changes – were seen as affecting "the self-structure as it develops by ordering the set of identities which comprise [it]" (Serpe 1987:45). Since identities – within this framework – are seen to form a "salience hierarchy" within the self structure (Stryker and Burke 2000:286), the activation of a particular identity as the basis for role performance reflects essentially "that identity's location in the salience hierarchy"

(Serpe 1987:53) or, put differently, the “probability that an identity will be invoked across a variety of situations” (Stryker and Burke 2000:286). Early identity theorists asserted that the impact of role commitment on identity salience was “primary” – meaning that “the basic social process emphasizes commitment's impact on identity salience, rather than the converse” (Serpe 1987:53). Commitment in its early renditions was thus defined as “the social and personal costs entailed in no longer fulfilling a role that is based on a given identity” (Stryker 1980). Commitment thus involved two mutually complementary forces, interactional commitment (which refers to the “extensiveness” or number of social relationships associated with a given identity) and affective commitment (which relates to the “intensiveness” or affect attached to the potential loss of social relationships and activities associated with the identity). While the authors viewed identities as temporally and cross-situationally fairly stable, they conceded that stability hinges primarily upon social processes of identity affirmation and/or disaffirmation.

The original work on role expectations at least implicitly acknowledged the existence of interpretational schemas, but the “internal” dimensions of identity dynamics were usually fairly muted (Stryker and Burke 2000). Burke’s pioneering work, on the other hand, provided useful insights into how identities constitute “self-meanings” that emerge reflexively as the result of in-situ role performances (e.g. Burke 1980; Burke and Reitzes 1991). Building on self-verification and self-affirmation processes in which situational meanings are compared to “*identity standards*” (culturally available meanings), his models assumed that meaning incongruencies in role

performances create motivational forces that translate into compensatory behaviors – either by altering situational factors or engaging in niche-seeking behaviors. More recently Stryker and Burke (2000) have created a combined model that better accounts for “external” (role) and “internal” (identity) dynamics (and vice versa). The “new” framework primarily argues that situational dynamics tend to reinforce high salience identities, though this process can be mediated by the actual identity affirmation processes. Like the original work, the model maintains that identity salience is related to role commitments, while role commitments – in turn – are related to the density of existing network/role ties. This means that increased salience leads to an increase in identity-congruent role performances – though questions as to how multiple identities alter these dynamics remain (see Burke 2006; Stryker and Burke 2000; Thoits 1983).

While Stryker and Burke (2000)’s synthesis constituted an important milestone in structural symbolic interactionist thought – it left a number of crucial questions – especially those related to identity change processes – unanswered. This conceptual vacuum was recently filled – at least partially – with Burke (2006)’s advancement of identity control theory (ICT). ICT – unlike earlier version of identity theory that conceived identities mainly in terms of roles – broadened the definition of identities as “a set of self-relevant meanings held as standards” (81). The theory asserts that the “meanings that define an identity are the identity standards of *“any group-, role-, or person-based identity”*. Having redefined “identity standards”, Burke argues that “while identities influence the way in which a role is played out, discrepancies between the meanings of the identity standard and the meanings of the role performance will result

in change”, which for him also means that altering the identity standard essentially “redefines who one is” (81). Identity standards, as conceived by the new ICT, are part of a “dynamic, self-regulating control system that operates when an identity is activated” (82). These “parts” are integrated in an interactional system that combines inputs from perceptions of self-relevant meanings (situational definitions), a comparator which compares the meaning input with the meaning standard (contained in the identity standard) and an “error output” which reflects a “discrepancy signal” between the two meanings that motivates changes in social behavior and produces emotional responses to offset the discrepancy. Burke (2006) stresses that each identity standard constitutes an “output of a high-level control system” (84), which means that changes in higher order systems are being passed down to lower-order processes. He also maintains that the “highest” level may not only constitute a “master status or personal identity that operates across role identities and situations” (84) but – in a footnote – also concedes that “higher-level perception are patterns or combinations of the perceptions from the lower-level systems” (84)⁹⁸.

While changes in identities (read changes in identity standards) are usually slow and take time (though dramatic events can induce faster change), Burke stresses that the perceived (and experienced) stability of the self is upheld by its own “resistance to change” tendencies. ICT also specifies a number of possible (and intuitively convincing) processes that can lead identities to change. Burke (2006), for example, argues that

⁹⁸ While Burke does not explicitly include the mechanics for in his graphic depiction of his identity change model, it seems necessary to include a feedback loop from the lower order identity systems to the higher (as a form of input). This feedback system then could help explain changes in the personal identity standards over time as well.

identities can either change via “external” cues (e.g. “persistent problems with verification of a particular identity” (85) or via disturbances of the situational meanings) as well as via “internal” cues (e.g. the chronic activation of multiple – conflicting – identities via shared meanings⁹⁹). The process of identity change (or more accurately, the change in respective identity standards), however, is partially mediated by the degree of commitment to each identity, the degree of salience of each identity, the interconnectedness with other identities and the use of identity maintenance processes such as identity cues, identity compartmentalization, rationalization processes, ego defense processes, identity identification via embrace of some sort of intersectional identity or the creation of a merged identity (e.g. Brewer and Roccas 2001; Roccas, Sagiv, Schwartz, and Knafo 2002; Swann 1990).

Shadows in the Cave:

Where Prototypicality Meets Identity Standards

In a recent comparison of social identity theory and identity, Stets and Burke (2000) found “substantial similarities and overlap” (224) but argue that both theories differ in terms of their bases for identity, mechanisms for identity activation and salience as well as the core processes that ensue after identities are activated. Since “group, role, and person identities [are said to] provide different sources of meaning” (234), SIT tends to focus primarily on self-categorization and social comparison processes that accentuate the ingroup prototypicality in “terms of attitudes, beliefs, and

⁹⁹ Here the classic idea of “role strain” seems to fit in nicely.

values, affective reactions, behavioral norms ... [or] styles of speech” (225) with the content of social categories being variable but categorization processes universal, while IT stresses differentiation processes especially related to roles. SIT is concerned with how stronger ingroup identification translates into commitment and IT stresses self-verification and self-categorization processes “in terms of membership in particular groups or roles” (226) – which often involves a much stronger emphasis on “person identities”. Stets and Burke (2000) thus argue that the basis of social identity lies mainly in the “uniformity of perception and action among group members” and role identities “in the differences of perceptions and actions that accompany a role as it relates to counterroles” (226). This distinction also means that role identities are seen as more related to “self-meanings and [role] expectations” (227) as well as to processes of role negotiation.

This differentiation, however, is somewhat arbitrary. It seems much more meaningful to conceive of “prototypicality” *and* “identity standard” as two aspects of an overarching system with the former tapping into perceived stable intra-category similarities (e.g. membership in group A) while the latter captures intra-category differences (e.g. specific status/role within group A). By broadening the concept of “identity standards”, it should therefore be possible to represent the self-understanding of a group (e.g. what it means to be a prototypical or idealtype member of a particular social category) *and* the meanings, cultural scripts, expectations that come with differences particular roles within one theoretical construct. More on this later.

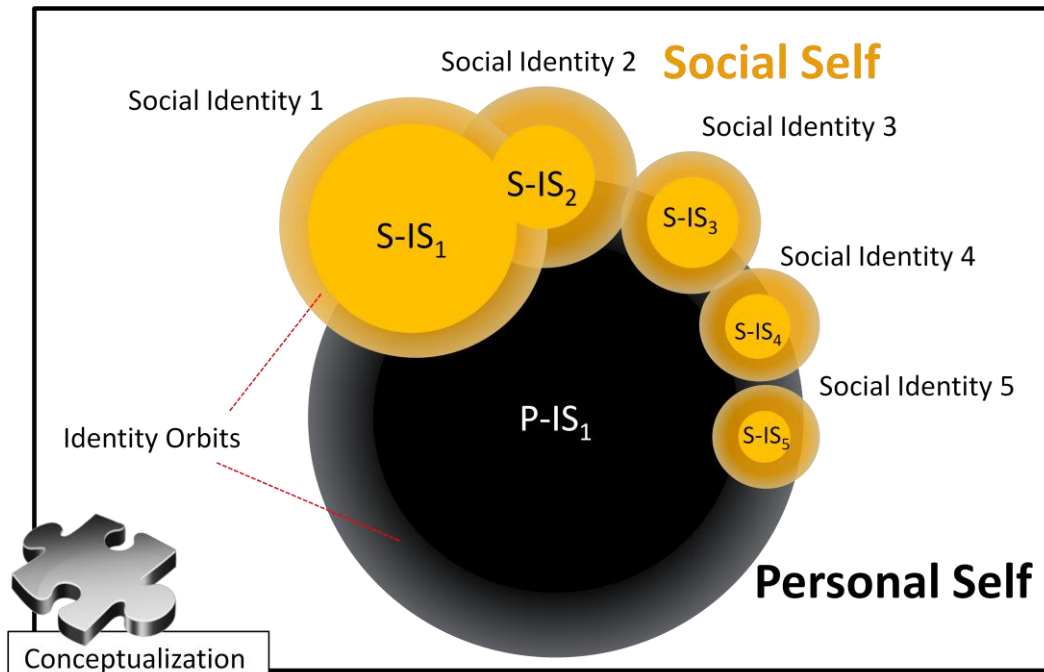


Figure 3: A Simplified Rendition of the Holistic Self

[Note: The self reflects the composite of the personal self (reflected here by the P-IS, the personal identity standard and its identity orbit) and a set of social identities (represented here as a series of S-Sis, social identity standards with their respective identity orbits)]

SIT also seems to differ in terms of activation and salience dynamics as well as the consequences that arise from such priming events. While SIT relates salience to the psychological significance of group membership and the accessibility as well as the fit of a social categories (Oakes 1987), IT emphasizes the structural embeddedness of individuals by linking salience to commitment dynamics (e.g. the number and intensity of social ties). So, rather than assuming salience, salience is viewed as *a structural outcome*. Moreover, both theoretical traditions emphasize different aspects of identity activation with SIT predicting a “depersonalization” dynamic and IT a self-verification process – often linking these dynamics to different motivational drivers (e.g. self-esteem versus self-efficacy). SIT, for example, argues depersonalization processes (which lead to

a centripetal push toward the “imagined” member prototype of the group) can better explain issues of stereotyping, group cohesiveness, ethnocentrism, cooperation and altruism, emotional contagions, collective action – or phenomena related to a uncertainty reduction (Hogg and Mullin 1999). IT, in contrast, predicts that identity activation translate into self-verification processes that lead individuals to see themselves “in terms of the role as embodied in the identity standard” (Stets and Burke 2000:232).

But despite the subtle and often important differences in the two theories one needs to realize that both the group’s prototype *and* the social identity standard essentially reflect a set of shared meanings (Burke 2006; Stets and Burke 2000). While IT provides additional clues as to how role differentiation dynamics within groups operate, it also provides – at least indirectly– insights as to how self-verification or self-regulation processes (also see Heise 1979; Stets 1997) relate to salient group memberships. The group prototype in SIT, on the other hand, essentially encapsulates – to borrow Hofstede’s (2001) term autostereotypes - a set of shared self-meanings of how the group views itself in terms of its prototypicality. Put another way, the concept of prototypicality – though employing different terminology (and often encapsulating different dynamics) – looks very much like a social identity standard for the group: the idealtypic social identity standard so to speak.

“Depersonalization” – at least in the understanding of authoritarian phenomena –probably represents nothing but a heightened awareness of the social identity standard of a salient social category (e.g. a salient authoritarian religious membership)

as well as a triggering of behavioral commitments to maintain that “standard”. Conformity to the group’s social identity standard of course is linked to differentiation processes (e.g. the creation of particular roles within this authoritarian religious group), but this represents a parallel rather than a different process – a process that in terms of authoritarian-phenomena becomes much less important than the shared set of meanings that come with the salient membership. In short: what *is* important to realize here is that SIT and IT can be brought together – at least within a makeshift framework that applies to highly salient category memberships – by postulating that the social identity which is associated with a salient group membership represents an internalized identity standard of the perceived prototype of the group (what it means to be a “good” member so to speak”).

The integration of these two theories – while incomplete and patchy – may represent an important step toward the conceptual development of a new model of authoritarianism because it can help integrate interactive aspects of personal identities *and* social identities. Personal identities – as many identity theorists concede – permeate (or interact with) other social identities (Deaux 1992; Stets 1995). Within the more holistic structure of the self, the personal identity acts as a form of the master identity – or as William James has so beautifully put it: the “self of all other selves ... [the] central part of the self [that is] felt” (James 1890 (James 1890/1950:297-298). In other words, the personal self/identity is the fairly stable inner core of the individual that enacts, interprets and choreographs the particular adaptation of social and cultural scripts that come with the acquisition of social identities.

In other words, the *holistic self* as it is being conceived here constitutes an interactive and interacting *composite* of a *unique personal identity* (which contains a semi-stable core or true identity/self) *and* a *social self* (made up of a set of – potentially overlapping – social identities). Rejecting postmodern conceptions that view the self as “decentered, relational, contingent, illusory, and lacking any core or essence” (Cote and Levine 2002:41) or views that see the personal self (or core or true self) as a unique product of late modernity¹⁰⁰, the new model of authoritarianism (see Figure 2) thus conceives the personal self in terms of a *personal identity standard* (P-IS₁) which reflects the idealtype of the personal self and a *personal identity orbit* (which represents the deviation of the ideal self) that involves a “set of meanings”. Social identities – which relate to category memberships (e.g. group membership), role commitments and/or situational engagements, are conceived here in terms of *social identity standards* (S-IS_x). It is assumed that the individual has an innate need/motivation/drive to strive toward internal consistency with the identity standards – a process that involves constant re-negotiation as the existence of identity orbits in Figure 3 indicate.

Having created a temporary and somewhat uneasy Band-Aid that helps link insights from SIT and IT via identity standards, it is now time to propose the ultimate conceptual synthesis: the reconceptualization of identity standards in terms of value-belief systems. So, the reader is asked to get a coffee, take a short nap or do some mental yoga before the chapter dives back into the crucial conceptual Kama Sutra. ...

¹⁰⁰ For an erudite discussion of how early enlightenment thinkers struggled with but already dealt with processes of the core self and/or authenticity – albeit lacking today’s conceptual sophistication – see Damrosch (2007).

But hang in there ... the long walk through the dusty deserts of theoretical frustration are almost over and ... a conceptual oasis is finally emerging on the hazy horizon.

Self Dynamics, Identity Standards and Value-Belief Systems

While enjoying the cool shade of the (hopefully) lush and relaxing oasis (before heading back into the conceptual nightmare of authoritarian phenomena), the reader is encouraged to briefly recollect the major milestone of the strenuous journey just put behind. This chapter started out by discussing the utility of values and value-belief systems by setting these conceptual constructs apart from related ideas. The chapter then tried to argue that value-belief systems constitute and/or provide a unique conceptual Esperanto that helps bridge collective and individual phenomena in social life. Juxtaposing the existence of a *personal value-belief system* (which constitutes an “organized summary” of *individual* experience) and a set of *social or collective value-belief systems* (which represent “organized summaries” of the collective – idealtypes value-belief systems that embody the nature of structural entities), it then argued that the two systems meet within the subcranial netherworlds of the individual (the later as internal copies of the collective prototype). The theoretical discussion then took a brief detour via a discussion of Max Weber’s elective affinities to show that the concept could provide not only a useful sensitizing device but also a useful framework to theoretically explore inherent affinities among individual, structural and ideational factors. Having tried to highlight the historical precedence of this way of thinking, the chapter then shifted toward trying to blend insights from social identity and structural symbolic interactionism. Showing that both theories provide mutually complementary insights –

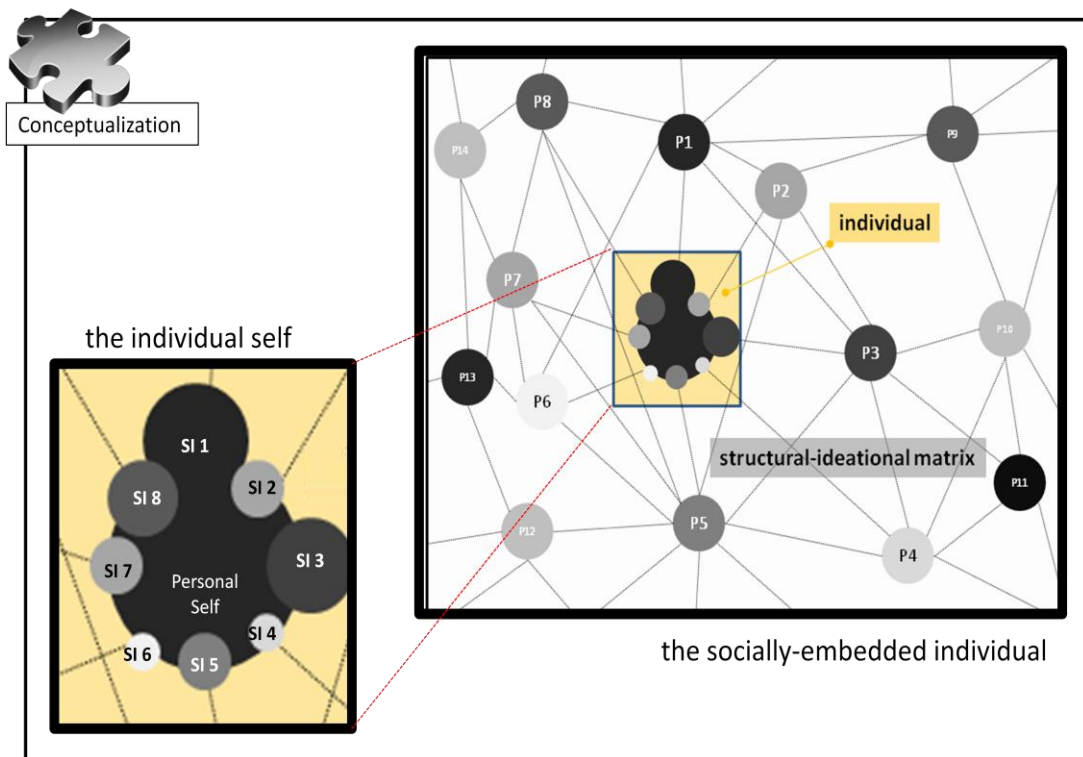


Figure 4: Embedded Self-Dynamics within the Structural-Ideational Matrix

[NOTE: P_x ... refers to different structural positions of the individual (e.g. in a family, group, an organization refers to the social identity associated with P_x ; the size of the SI_x bubble indicates the salience of that part social identity; the different gray shades indicate different value-belief systems: the closer the fit the close respective value-belief systems; other structural dynamics are kept constant]

especially when brought together under the ordering principle of “identity standards” – the chapter argued that this conceptual move can help better address issues of salience, commitment to particular groups rather than “some” group as well as pay more tribute to the structural embeddedness of the self (see Figures 3 and 4). With the conceptual weightlifting out of the way – it seems - the time has come for the final major conceptual coup: the substitution of identity standards (shared meanings) with value-belief systems. In doing so, as will be argued, it may be possible to better explain how salience issues, threat susceptibilities as well as value-belief dynamics between the individual and the structural-ideational matrix operate.

For decades scholars have stressed the importance of self-values as crucial forces in self-definition, self-conception and self-evaluation processes (McClelland 1985; Smith 1963; Turner 1968). Self-values (often linked to core beliefs) comprise an important part of the personal self-concept (Brewer and Roccas 2001), and are “intimately bound up with a person’s sense of self” (Feather 1992:112) and thus can be considered “a type of personality disposition” (Bilsky & Schwartz 1994:178). Values and personal identities share a number of similarities that make them look like two constructs tapping into similar underlying realities. As Hitlin (2003) has pointed out, personal identities share five major aspects with values: both concepts (1) draw on concepts and beliefs, (2) involve desirable endstates or behaviors, (3) are trans-situational, (4) affect social cognition and behavior and (5) are hierarchically ordered. Others have observed that the “intensity of arousal as a self is linked to the importance of values for individuals as selves” (Swanson 1989:15) – with more central self-values leading to more activation. Rokeach (1973) – building on (Allport 1961) – thus comments that “a major advantage gained in thinking about a person as a system of values rather than a cluster of traits is that it becomes possible to conceive of his undergoing change as a result of changes in social conditions” (21). Putting values at the core of the personal identity – as Hitlin (2003) has brilliantly done – also not only helps to understand the “cohesion experienced among ... various social identities” (118) but also why we select particular groups that “feel” right and roles that “seem appropriate”. In the same vein Erickson (1995), in a powerful treatise on the usefulness of value-based

models of authenticity¹⁰¹ (commitment to the “true” self), argues that individuals tend to seek out collective identities that “express our most important self-values” (134). In other words, situational identities can be seen as “a behavioral outgrowth of one’s personal identity”. Building on Gecas (2000)’s work on “value identities”¹⁰², Hitlin (2003) thus forcefully and eloquently argues that:

“Personal identity is produced through value commitments. The cross-situational sense of consistency that individuals experience can be conceptualized, and studied empirically, by focusing on their personal value-structures. Values develop in social contexts, draw on culturally significant symbolic material, and are experienced as a necessary and fundamental, but noncoerced, aspect of self” (121)

In a footnote, however, he concedes that “opportunities both for choosing situations and for acting within them are tied inherently to issues of power, structure, race, class, gender and the like” (124). Since personal and social identity systems are inherently interconnected (Deaux 1992), environmental information that is encapsulated in values – directly or indirectly – can flow bi-directionally across the different aspects of the self. This means that an integration of self dynamics via value-based conceptualizations can help – as Hitlin (2003) has rightly observed – pull together “overstructural and overindividual” conceptualizations by shedding light on structural and ideational factors that constrain the value-belief-based niche-seeking processes of the personal self. With respect to the interactional reinforcement mechanisms that

¹⁰¹ Erickson (1995) sees authenticity as the “commitment to self”. She builds on Heidegger argument and contends that people are “neither authentic nor inauthentic but more or less so”. In short, authenticity “assumes the existence of a transsituational and somewhat stable aspect of self, but it is not reducible to it” (122).

¹⁰² Gecas (2000) – unlike Hitlin (2003) – advances a conceptualization of value identities as a unique phenomenon (which he uses to explain commitment and engagement in social movements).

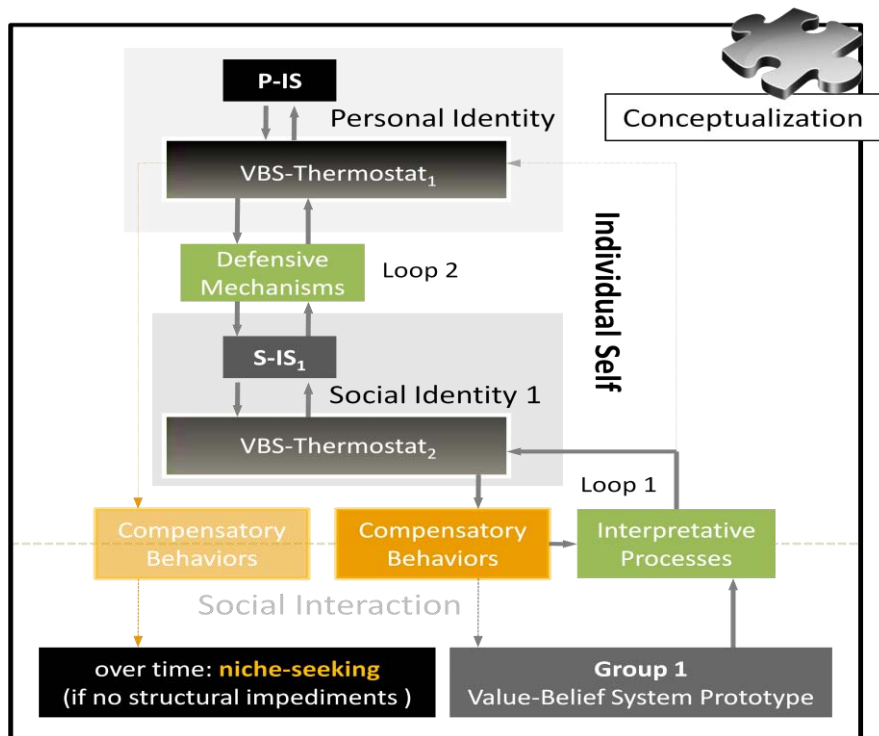


Figure 5: Model Core – Thermodynamics of the VBS-Based Self

[NOTE: The diagram illustrates a hypothetical self dynamics associated with a salient membership in group 1. P-IS reflects the *personal identity standard* in terms of the personal value-belief system; S-SI₁ reflects the *social identity standard* and represents an internal representation of the value-belief prototype of group 1; the VBS-Thermostats are functionally equivalent to the “*comparators*” in Burke’s (2006) model but here – instead of role performances – they compare VBS fits (value-belief system identity standards)]

occur among individual, structural and ideational factors, Gecas (2000), for example, has commented that “[t]he power and persistence of ideologies ... are in the identities and values they provide for the self” – a phenomenon that seems especially pertinent under condition of threat (e.g. anomie, war) because it is under those situations that value-belief systems provide “meaning, purpose, and direction”. Durkheim probably would have loved that

The versatility of values and value-belief systems as sensitive recording devices of internal biological *and* external social realities – as experiential libraries that bring continuity and stability to the self while, at the same time, providing receptivity to the need for change – makes them prime candidates for a possible reconceptualization of personal and social identity standards. Value-belief systems – when placed at the core of identity standards – can bridge the personal-collective divide, overcome the nature-nurture diatribe, transcend the conscious-unconscious dialectic *and* encapsulate a considerable amount of the meanings that people attach to structural engagements. Since the thermostat of the self (via self-verification and self-authentication processes) constantly monitors the degree to which (especially) salient identity standards match up with perceived reality, the self – identity maintenance processes aside for a moment – is continuously in touch with its own internal and external surrounding via subtle value-belief fine-tuning mechanisms.

Figure 5 reflects a graphical rendition of the conceptual framework laid out here. While strongly building on previous models (see Burke 2006; Stryker and Burke 2000), the figure tries to capture more strongly realities associated with authoritarian phenomena. Authoritarian phenomena, as will be argued more strongly in Chapter 6, are inherently related to *existentially-felt needs* of the insecure self to find quasi-security in the establishment of value-belief systems (see loop 2 in Figure 5) – in other words in a VBS fit between the personal self *and* a particular salient social identity (or set of social identities). Since value-belief systems enshrine *experiential realities*, they continuously translate biological, social *and* temporal stimuli associated with the

vagaries of life and compress them within sets of more manageable experiential libraries (identity standards).

VBS-Thermostats – which reflect the self’s strive for internal consistency – probably operate at *both* an intuitive level (e.g. via emotional and subconscious heuristics) *as well as* at a cognitive level (e.g. via a more rational engagement of experienced attitude-belief-value discrepancies). The “thermostats” of the self (borrowing Erickson’s (1995) terminology) thus help not only to create and maintain a sense of authenticity for the secure self but also create a semi-secure phenomenological cosmos for the insecure self. It is these VBS thermostats then that create the motivational push for niche-seeking processes if value-belief systems cannot be reconciled via either intrapsychic defensive mechanisms (e.g. compartmentalization, rationalization processes or dissonance mechanism) or slow shifts in the personality identity standards via prolonged structural reinforcement mechanisms.

In short, the chapter has tried to lay out a tentative (and partial) explanation why individuals are pulled toward certain structural-ideational niches (as opposed to others), why these individuals may react with coping mechanisms (such as cognitive rigidity or compartmentalization) when trapped in incongruent value-belief matrices and why – whenever possible – individuals will try to avoid structural-ideational settings that are dramatically incompatible with their own personal identity standards (especially when it comes to values that relate to the experiential grounding of the individual). Put another way, we have arrived at a temporary surrogate that may help explain Weber’s elective affinities: the seeming pull and push that individuals experience within the logic of

particular structural and ideational landscapes. Equipped with this conceptual framework, it will now be possible to make some sense of the seemingly divergent explanations of the authoritarian phenomena.

Chapter 6: Models, Scenarios and “New” Horizons

“[T]he vast inequality of conditions and fortunes, ... the great variety of passions and of talents, of useless arts, of pernicious arts, of frivolous sciences, ... issue clouds of prejudice equally contrary to reason, to happiness, to virtue. We ... see the chiefs foment everything that tends to weaken men formed into societies by dividing them; everything that, while it gives society an air of apparent harmony, sows in it the seeds of real division; everything that can inspire the different orders with mutual distrust and hatred by an opposition of their rights and interest, and of course strengthen that power which contains them all.” (Rousseau 1754)

Having had to endure hours and hours of quasi-random “archival” drudgery and conceptual madness — an interesting homage to some of the psychological realities that seem to characterize the day-to-day etiology of the authoritarian cosmos – the few lonesome readers who may have made it this far have suffered long enough on the epistemological cross and are now ready to partake in a final conceptual accelerando. So, again, what on earth is an authoritarian phenomenon? What happens when it occurs? And more importantly, how does it differ from other – seemingly very similar constructs such as mere ingroup conformity and/or outgroup aggression? Why do some individuals declare permanent phenomenological residency in these settings while others – given the opportunity – will emigrate to more non-authoritarian pastures? And to what extent can structural-ideational niches sculpt the psychological realities of individuals and vice versa? Well, what should be clear by now that there are no easy answers to these very complex and difficult questions. However, while the quest for a

true grand narrative with respect to authoritarianism will remain the stuff that makes Friday nights at the pub “fun” (and will thus help secure a stable livelihood for the owners of these establishments for the decades to come), the obsessions of the self-deluded social scientist that drove these relentless inquiries into the fascinating (but often disheartening) worlds of authoritarianism may not have been entirely in vain. Once the pillages of the conceptual crusade are scrutinized and the theoretical trophies more carefully laid out, what emerges are a few (amazingly familiar) insights into these perennial but important questions.

This chapter thus represents the postcard that the researcher sends at the end of a grueling yet stimulating intellectual pilgrimage. It distills a few highlights and aims to provide a set of partial explanations to those and related questions. The chapter – in particular – will try to argue that a conceptual deconstruction of authoritarian and authoritarian-like phenomena into their respective individual, ideational *and* structural components is crucial and can offer a much more powerful theoretical platform from which to understand the interactive complexities. After briefly sketching out the “new” lay symptomatology, the chapter therefore goes on to suggest that – rather than reflecting a human inevitability – authoritarianism may be better conceived as an *emergent* property of *complexity*. Situated in an exploration of a series of illustrative scenarios that derive from the “new” interactional model (see Table 2, Chapter 5 and Figure 8), the chapter thus tries to demonstrate how various ideatype constellations can translate into vastly different salience patterns, threat processes and self-dynamics and thus lead to *differential probabilities* for the emergence of “authoritarian

reactions”. While conceding the highly speculative nature of the argumentation, the chapter maintains that viewing authoritarianism as a *particular alignment of specific factors* – an interactional crescendo of elective affinities so to speak – not only helps to distinguish it from other phenomena but also sharpens the theoretical utility of the concept.

The “Authoritarian Constellation”: Elective Affinities, Self Dynamics and Interactional Tête-à-Têtes

Main Characteristics of the Authoritarian Phenomenon

Chapters 2-4, among other things, tried to accentuate a series of conceptual continuities that resurface again and again in the annals of authoritarianism research (albeit in the guise of different theoretical and empirical reincarnations). The persistence of such themes seems to give credence to the theoretical assumption that authoritarian phenomena are rooted in, driven by and sustained through a very delicate realist substratum. A closer look at Table 2 – which tries to render some of the recurrent patterns, however incomplete, more visible – hints at a curious though highly intuitive narrative. As many early eclecticists (e.g. Allport 1954; Fromm 1941; Reich 1933 [1970]) have so cogently argued, factors that amplify (or dampen) authoritarian reactions – that is processes that lead to the development of strong submission to salient structural norms and authorities (or better the VBSs that they represent) as well as innovative forms of aggression toward a range of intra and intergroup deviance – constitute an intricate, highly reinforcing *interactional system*. Whether one tries to depart from individual factors to arrive at ideational factors or vice versa, it is interesting to realize

how the facets of these factors (see Figure 8) – directly or indirectly – seem to provide differential testimonies to the same creation story: *experiential impoverishment* (or as Karen Stenner (2005) in her book the “Authoritarian Dynamic” put it: “preference for sameness”). So, in what ways can the “new” - and often tedious – reconceptualization of the authoritarian phenomenon as an interactive framework of VBS-based self dynamics help shed light into the authoritarian wastelands and the forces that seem to set off authoritarian mouse traps that “snap” whenever the “system” is being (perceived as) threatened? And – more importantly – how can one explain that *some individuals* (but not others) seem to be inoculated against the lure of authoritarian temptations?

Looking at the nature of dampening and amplifying forces in Table 2, it is interesting to note that many of the empirical findings (see chapter 2-4) can be captured by these few conceptual themes (which themselves – of course – include much more complex underlying realities). The compilation especially indicates that authoritarian phenomena (in whatever disguise they may come) revolve around mutually complementary, highly derivative and ultimately reinforcing choreographies. The table, for example, insinuates the existence of biological undertows (e.g. as captured by “traits”) that limit the capacity of individuals to deal with new experience, novelty, information and certain types of differences and as well as the higher need for order in an individual’s life (e.g. which constitute major characteristics of the insecure self). These biological realities create psychological predispositions that – consciously or unconsciously – constrain *experiential novelty* either via *psychological coping mechanisms* (e.g. increased cognitive rigidity, the reduction of mental categories to

Table 2: Select Amplifiers and Dampeners of Authoritarian Phenomena

	Amplifiers	Dampeners
Individual Factors		
“biological” predispositions	low level of openness to new experience, high levels of conscientiousness & agreeableness (on facets)	high level of openness to new experience, low levels of conscientiousness & agreeableness (on facets)
experiential dimensions	high need for order, certainty and/or cognitive closure low tolerance for ambiguity, novelty or differences high (normative) threat sensitivity	less need for order, certainty and/or cognitive closure higher tolerance for ambiguity, novelty or differences lower (normative) threat sensitivity
cognitive characteristics	cognitive rigidity, compartmentalization tendencies maintenance of fewer cognitive categories	cognitive flexibility, less compartmentalization category differentiation more common
miscellaneous factors	lower levels of positive emotions, lower empathy levels, higher distrust	higher levels of positive emotions, higher empathy levels, less distrust
Structural Factors		
structural demands	higher	Lower
structural encapsulation	less permeable, stronger structural ties	more permeable, weaker and/or flexible structural ties
nature of social environment	heterogeneous (but few genuine inter-category relations)	heterogeneous (but with genuine inter-category relations)
status hierarchies	more developed and more vertical	weaker and/or more horizontal
existence of inequalities	prevalent	weaker or more latent
nature of authority	strong hierarchical authority structures democratic decision-making processes minimized more “irrational authority” (conformity = goal)	weaker hierarchical authority structures democratic decision-making processes encouraged more “rational authority” (conformity = mean toward end)
socialization dynamics	overregulated and affectively impoverished childrearing environment, dramatic socialization events	well-regulated and affectively attentive childrearing environment
Ideational Factors		
core beliefs	world is a dangerous, threatening and competitive place, human “nature” inherently problematic, focus on drive control, more focus on moral absolutes and/or continuities	world is not a dangerous and threatening place, human “nature” good, focus on human potential, stress on moral evolution and/or negotiation
intergroup beliefs	more hierarchical, justification of inequalities between in-group and out-groups	less hierarchical, more egalitarian, more tolerant of intergroup differences
core values	social conformity, security, conventionalism, high uncertainty avoidance and power distance	self-direction, stimulation, universalism, benevolence, low power distance, lower uncertainty avoidance
value-belief systems	e.g. social conservatism, religious fundamentalism	e.g. humanism, democratic socialism, libertarianism

describe reality, the felt “need” for certainty, compartmentalization of information, cognitive dissonance mechanisms or ambiguity avoidance) *or* behavioral strategies (e.g. the search for structural and ideational environments that limit differences, provide phenomenological stability and comfort the fragile individual makeup). Niche-seeking processes thus guide the insecure self into structural black holes – experiential traps thrive on hierarchical authority structures, increase encapsulation pressures, domesticate demands for order and offer ideational shock therapies that reduce experiential novelty for the individual.

Translated into the lingo of the “new” VBS model of authoritarian self dynamics (see Chapter 5) this means that whenever the identity standards of the personal and (the salient aspects) of the social self match as well as crystallize around normative VBS structures (to use Tomkins 1964/1995 terminology) – that is, narratives that celebrate quasi-Hobbesian narratives that cultivate experiential stability, simplicity and harp on individual’s experiential angst (e.g. via values such as social conformity, security, traditionalism, power distance, uncertainty avoidance) – the likelihood for authoritarian phenomena increases exponentially. Possible accommodation of any existing (or created) VBS differences become subject to structural contingencies and the (related) availability of alternative VBS narratives (hence insecure selves may end up – or are produced by – religiously fundamentalist groups, conservative movements and/or classic fascist matrices). Understanding how this works in situ, however, requires a

closer look at the functionality of value belief systems for the insecure self¹⁰³ (as opposed the more secure self).

Since – as chapter 5 argued – value belief systems delineate (both at a conscious and unconscious level) *experiential comfort zones* for the individual, they not only pre-pattern desirable cognitive and affective parameters but – in extension – also restrict or expand the narrative vocabulary available to the individual to make sense of his/her own experiential tantrums. This also means that any change in the personal VBS identity standard will encompass changes in the “radius” and the properties of the experiential bubble in which the individual resides. Put differently, any felt experiential VBS mismatch (either via cognitive engagement of the core values and beliefs or affectively via feelings – e.g. does it feel right to be “there”?) creates motivational undercurrents that entice individuals (and/or collectives) to gravitate toward more compatible VBSs. The nature of these equilibrating forces, forces that echo (and market) many of the core tenets of Weber’s “elective affinities” differ, however, for individuals with insecure and more secure selves as well as with the type of structural and ideational factors that exist. To see which particular constellations may congeal into authoritarian reactions, the following sections will thus explore – via a series of hypothetical scenarios – differential self dynamics¹⁰⁴.

¹⁰³ The same analysis could be made for effects on the collective self – but this exploration is beyond the scope of the dissertation.

¹⁰⁴ Due to the nature of the empirical evidence found in the literature of authoritarianism (which overemphasizes authoritarian expressions on the political “right”), the following scenarios explore the secure-insecure self dynamics only in terms of humanist versus normative VBSs – with the former being associated to secure selves and the latter being linked to insecure selves. The model, however, recognizes that interpretational and structural dynamics can create situations in which insecure selves can end up in humanist VBS matrices – and that under those conditions authoritarian reactions become fairly likely.

Perambulations in an Alternate (Conceptual) Universe

Setting the metaphorical and conceptual limitations of the model aside for a moment, how can structural conditions – for example – affect the VBS calibration processes (e.g. between the personal and a salient social self)? Since structural factors can either (1) catalyze “natural” VBS matching processes (e.g. when P-IS and S-IS are fairly matched), (2) force mismatched identity standards to equilibrate and/or (3) facilitate VBS landscapes more conducive to niche-seeking processes (which in turn should lead to more natural VBS accommodation dynamics), it becomes interesting to see how individuals fare in various structural-ideational grids. Since scenarios that tap into structural (and/or ideational) diversity should create substantially more complexity (e.g. mutually reinforcing, cancelling, contradictory and/or damping processes) – while important – cannot be addressed here. To simplify the discussion, the scenarios will only involve *one* salient social identity – which can be conceived as either a single social identity (e.g. associated with a radical authoritarian political and/or religious group) or a set of mutually overlapping social identities that create a composite identity (e.g. individuals growing up in a fascist society in which different institutional VBS identity standards should be fairly similar and thus created overlapping meaning structures). Trading detail for scope and stripping away any extraneous layers, the discussion thus

While these scenarios are beyond the scope of this dissertation, they present interesting points of departure for future research (e.g. into expressions of militant pacificism, radical atheism and/or statist forms of socialism or communism).

hopes to, at least rudimentarily, be able to demonstrate how static *and* dynamic processes may operate within the logic of “elementary forms”¹⁰⁵.

Predicaments of the “Insecure” Self

Understanding the more contentious (but also much more interesting) phylogeny and ontology of authoritarian phenomena requires a cold dive into a sequence of hypothetical scenarios (see Figure 6) that, with very broad strokes, aim to illustrate how personal VBS identity standards (P-ISs) of the insecure self tend to respond to changes in the “matrix” and which “constellations” are most likely to build up to authoritarian phenomena.

Scenariocopia I¹⁰⁶: Of Camels and Lions

Scenarios 1 and 2 (see Figure 6) capture hypothetical situations in which the insecure self finds itself in an environment where the ideational facets are conducive to forms of authoritarianism. Both scenarios differ, however, with respect to the structural processes that they implicate: while scenario 1 zeroes in on amplifying dynamics, scenario 2 explores the dampening aspects of the interactional realities (also see Table 2). So, what exactly happens under these circumstances?

In scenario 1 (the *classic authoritarian constellation*) the VBS match between the P-IS identity standard and the VBS prototype of the matrix (as reflected in the social identity standard imprint) – with the help of strong structural pressures – should stay

¹⁰⁵ The word game here does not represent grand delusions of the author (see Homans (1961) for such a potential pathology) but a truly genuine (albeit belated) encore for the analytical and empirical brilliance of Durkheim (1912).

¹⁰⁶ This term is made up but it felt “natural” given the depths and “abundance” of insights that scenarios can provide to the curious mind.

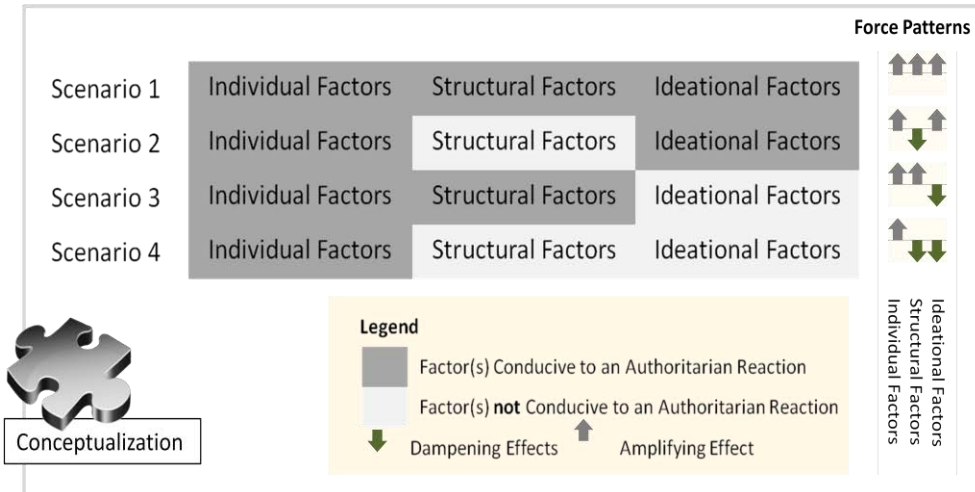


Figure 6: Scenario Set I and Its Interactional Force Pattern

equilibrated.¹⁰⁷ The synchronization process should lead to a quasi-morphing of the meanings attached with the personal and social identities – which means that normative threats against the salient structural entity (e.g. the “group”) should be experienced by the individual as a threat against the *personal self*. Since it is the value-belief system that anchors, protects and shelters the insecure self, threats against the foundation of this system – either in form of normative erosion, competing value-belief systems and/or direct threats – should trigger a mélange of cognitive and behavioral defenses. The authoritarian reaction which tends to be characterized by stricter norm enforcement dynamics (which is aimed at protecting the experientially important value-belief system of the salient “in-group”), demands for stronger authority (to secure and enact the protective measures) and support for more “aggressive” stances toward normative deviance (e.g. propaganda, endorsement of intergroup hostilities etc.) can thus be seen – as many authors have argued in the past (e.g. Fromm 1941) – as a toolkit of re-

¹⁰⁷ Minor orbital deviations (see Figure 3) which – for example – could reflect interpretational processes and/or structural recalibration effects can exist.

equilibration strategies (or in Fromm's dictionary: "mechanisms of escape"). By the same token, salience – according to the "new" framework – reflects nothing but a *structurally-induced and/or structurally-reinforced VBS equilibrium* between the personal self and the *matching* social identity (or set of identities). But how responsive is this recalibration process really? While the equilibrium – due to the nature of the VBS thermostats – should be conceived as a *dynamic equilibrium*, the question remains as to whether biological contingencies (e.g. genes, gene-states, "traits") can – somewhat fatalistically – lock individuals into particular experiential bubbles (as expressed by the personal VBS identity standards)?

Recent insights from developmental psychology and neuroscience (Gazzaniga 2009; Harmon-Jones and Winkielman 2007) suggest that brain development – especially in the early years of human development – *can be amazingly plastic*. This could suggest that while genetics (via the directorship of personality "traits") can constrain the gamut of possible identity standard shifts *at any given point in time* (as surveys of individuals with low levels of openness to experience tend to demonstrate) – the biological view also seems to accommodate more complex structural-ideational explanations. What, for example, would happen to a child who grows up in the matrix parameters set out by scenario 1 (see again Figure 6)? Would the biological elements to the personal VBS identity standard remain crystallized around its "original" specifications or would they – within limits – respond to the structural-ideational realities in which the individual is embedded. In other words, is it not conceivable that an ideational environment that impoverishes novelty (e.g. by dwarfing independent

intellectual inquiry along certain dimensions such as collapsing moral rights and wrongs into narrow mental dualisms) *while at the same time* putting strong structural brakes on niche-seeking processes eventually creates an equally impoverished neurobiological landscape? And, would it not also be possible to imagine that children born with biological portfolios *initially* more open to new experience and/or lower needs for order (in other words, personal identity standards capable of accommodating broader and more diverse value portfolios) be able over time – and within the rules laid out by the neuronal rubber bands in the brain – *biologically acclimatize* to the surroundings (also see Figures 7 and the related discussion on the secure self)? That is, would not a strict and impoverished environment (e.g. with respect to value, belief and idea differences) eventually lead to an atrophication process in which the brain slowly learns to prune the range of mental categories necessary to capture reality? And couldn't this change in neuronal activity (e.g. fewer mental categories) also translate into a stronger *inability* to accommodate new – especially VB-related – information (as reflected in the so-called “trait” of openness to new experience or psychological defense mechanisms such as cognitive rigidity)¹⁰⁸?

While these meandering thoughts seem like biological digressions, highly-speculative attempts of storytelling and in many ways a possible overextension of the author's expertise, the discussion – rather than being a tangential diversion – in fact gets at *the very heart* of the intellectual debates surrounding authoritarian phenomena.

¹⁰⁸ Taken a slightly different take on evolutionary dynamics, it seems much more intuitive to think that “evolution” has produced highly responsive brains – brains that are able of accommodating changes in the *actual* environment. Hence, it seems much more meaningful to talk about environmentally-shaped *gene states* than genes. Research on “traits” – if it measures anything biological at all – probably primarily taps into *gene states* and thus blatantly conflates the contributions of social and biological forces.

These views not only question the academic fetish of the statistical actor/agent (in which the individual is reduced to a probabilistic crunching game – a mathematical abstraction that can be beautifully captured by numbers but can rarely be found in real life) but also aims to show how biology, sociology and psychology provide complementary insights. Following this line of argumentation, the analysis of scenario 3 (see Figure 6) further illuminates the problematique of “biological plasticity” and interactional dynamics. Temporal explorations into the effects that strong VBS mismatches have on an insecure self – a self that resides in a structurally-demanding but VBS-mismatched environment (e.g. a financially-deprived 64-year old stuck on remote a “liberal” and/or “humanist” island far out in the Pacific Ocean) should be especially enlightening. The experiential tides of scenario 3 with its strong structural forces should put brakes on any possible niche-seeking processes and thus provide strong temporal incentives for P-IS change. While structural forces will undoubtedly produce shifts, the question remains as to whether the biological realities of the individual (e.g. “traits”) can accommodate more drastic shifts and, if so, are there critical developmental periods that cannot be circumvented (e.g. children born with insecure biological predispositions nurtured in these environments may be able to biologically *and* socially adapt while other, older and more rigid selves may not). These thoughts do not only pose interesting questions to the sociologist but also should provide fascinating “new” intellectual departures for developmental psychologists and neuroscientists who want to broaden structural-ideational signatures in their theoretical models.

Setting the innocence of temporal nature-nurture coquetry aside, what is the likelihood that scenario 3 will lead to an authoritarian reaction? Given the logic of the model, the moderating effects of the ideational factors (e.g. more tolerant, positive and egalitarian VBSs; see also Table 2) should put a strong damper on its any possible emergence. Partial support for such reasoning comes from earlier research that suggests that individuals from groups that espouse more Humanist ideologies (e.g. non-statist forms of communism, democratic socialism) score substantially lower on measures of authoritarianism – and that these differences are moderated by the degree to which people are committed to the *ideals* (e.g. values and beliefs) of the group (e.g. Altemeyer 1988; Fromm 1929/1984; Rokeach 1960; Rokeach 1973; Stone and Smith 1993). Hence, highly mismatched VBS P-ISs (like in this scenario) may translate into *simple social conformity* to the VBS prototype but – due to the fewer daily threat and danger messages and a much stronger focus on human potential and/or human goodness – it seems less likely that authoritarianism proper will develop under these circumstances. However, individuals unable to equilibrate with the VBS prototype of the environment (e.g. due to biological and/or structural factors) will be forced to engage into much stronger cognitive defensive mechanisms (also see Figure 5) – which over time – may produce the stereotypical Satrian zombie who *becomes* his/her role (see Erickson 1995) and/or generate chronic feelings of inauthenticity (e.g. due to the chronic experiential VBS disequilibria). Since is the social identity as well as the structural contingencies that are primarily attractive to the insecure self, however, the question still remains to what degree ideational factors (e.g. the VBS content) can

temper authoritarian reactions. This rationale also suggests that situations in which structural factors become more important than ideational ones (e.g. like in Stalinist Russia) may also (or exclusively) be tied to the actual compositional makeup of the “group” (e.g. the ratio of insecure and secure selves in the group).

Scenario 2, in contrast, represents a modification of scenario 1 and explores the effects of structural relaxation (see Figure 6). The model suggests that as structural demands ease the forces for VBS equilibration should ease as well. Given the strong VBS match between the P-IS of the insecure self and the VBS of the structural-ideational support system (both espouse core tenets of normative VBSs), however, the scenario should create centrifugal forces that could eventually jumpstart structural encapsulation processes (and thus it seems that scenario 2 has a build-in tendency to gravitate toward scenario 1). Since the structural matrix, however, is more permeable to niche-seeking processes, it may also be that the individual – if presented with the structural opportunities to affiliate with other VBS prototypes – will eventually drift away from the “current” normative VBS prototype. While structural and ideational undercurrents ultimately matter, the individual is likely to remain within the boundaries of the normative VBS cosmos (e.g. join a similar group).

In scenario 4 (see Figure 6), on the other hand, which involves a much higher P-S-ISs mismatch, fewer structural impediments to niche-seeking and more diverse and/or tolerant ideational realities, insecure selves are probably provided with strong impetus to seek out more normative social environments. If the insecure self, however, remains immersed within this structural-ideational setup for a prolonged time, the P-IS should

again to start drifting into the direction of the VBS prototype associated with the salient identity. Depending on when this VBS “re-socialization” occurs (e.g. childhood and/or adulthood), to what degree biological walls exist (e.g. how biologically plastic the P-IS is) and how pronounced the VBS mismatch is, the insecure self may or may not be able to accommodate the necessary shifts and thus again either be forced to engage in stronger compensatory behaviors (e.g. compartmentalization, maintaining an identity distance or changing the environment) or live in a state of constant VBS disequilibrium.

Taken together, these four scenarios provide a small glimpse into the interactional complexity that can amplify and/or dampen propensities toward authoritarian phenomena. The discussion suggests that authoritarianism proper relates to *functional VBS matches* – meaning that the experiential comfort zone of the VBS prototype satisfies the experiential needs of the insecure self (as manifested in the VBS P-IS). Structural and ideational factors thus operate as equilibration primers and VBS templates with the former acting mainly as a potent catalyst and the latter shaping the actual social chemistry.

Predicaments of the “Secure” Self

To deepen the understanding of the circumstances under which authoritarian reactions (or authoritarian phenomena) are likely to emerge, the following discussion expands the previous hypothetical explorations and tries to illuminate the VBS dynamics associated with the more *secure* self. Drawing again on four different interactional scenarios (see Figure 7), the section especially details the self’s encounters with various structural-ideational stages to understand potential thresholds and tipping points in the

authoritarian drama. Mirroring the discussions on the insecure self, it again illustrates in what ways structural, ideational and individual processes can maintain or change personal VBS identity standards (P-ISs) and thus heighten the likelihood of authoritarian reactions to emerge (also see Figure 8). While there seems to be much less known about the ordeals of the secure self within the authoritarian matrix, work on ideological preferences tends to hint that less Hobbesian, more democratic, libertarian and/or humanist VBSs are associated with different types of “personality” profiles than those for more insecure selves. Studies on liberals, for example, suggest that these individuals tend to be more novelty-seeking, broadminded, open to differences and/or new experiences (Carney, Jost, Gosling, and Potter 2008; Jost 2009) as well as seem to have stronger “needs” for “understanding” and “change” (Choma 2009) – characteristics that are probably partly woven into (and/or partially induced by) the structurally-maintained fabric of the collective VBS (also see Table 2). Given these parameters of the “self”, what then are the actual chances for a more secure self to succumb to the authoritarian lure?

Scenariocopia II: Tantrums of the Innocent Child

Scenarios 5 and 6 of the third set of scenarios (see Figure 7) follow the temporal waltzes of the “secure” self in ideationally-incongruent social swamps as well as explore the ability of structural forces to induce possible VBS P-IS shifts (and thus the likelihood of producing individuals that will *experientially* embrace normative VBSs). While research on “traits” and twin studies seem to indicate a greater biological potential for VBS shifts and/or VBS acceptance (due to, for example, higher levels of openness to experience, or lower levels of conscientiousness), it is much less clear how responsive

this biological system actually is and/or if these “biological” realities lead to similar VBS affinities. Strong structural encapsulation processes and/or structural demands in combination with more normative VBSs (see scenario 5) may or may not lead to shifts in the VBS P-IS. Given openness to new experience and the stronger psychological resilience of the secure self (see Table 2), it seems likely that – at least initially – the individual will (consciously and/or unconsciously) try to engage the VBS system before (e.g. attempt to accommodate VBS synchronization). Encountering the experiential disconnect that comes with the experiential comfort zone embodied by the normative VBS, the secure self (like the insecure self) will have to eventually engage in psychic defense mechanisms. How long this initial psychological defense line can hold, how permeable the dialogue between the personal identity and the social identity will remain (see loop 2 in Figure 5), and/or how easy it is for the more secure individual to detach from the structural-ideational requirements is an important but difficult question to answer.

What happens, for example, to “secure selves” that get locked into structurally impermeable environments for prolonged periods of time (e.g. prisoners of war, individuals in fascist states)? It seems plausible that these individuals (at least initially) will *socially conform* to the VBS prototype of the structural-ideational matrix but *fail to experientially equilibrate*. This distinction between *simple* social conformity (associated with a chronic VBS disequilibrium) and *experiential* social conformity (VBS PI-SI standards match) – a theoretical split that the early students of authoritarianism had already identified (e.g. Allport 1954; Erickson 1954; Fromm 1941; Kant 1784) – is

crucial here because it not only helps to conceptually separate authoritarianism proper from mere social conformity but also demonstrates that the experiential realities associated with each phenomena and the affiliated salience dynamics are *qualitatively quite different*.

While experiential social conformity grounds the insecure self in the world and thus provides it with a pseudo-secure experiential reality, simple social conformity is the natural outcome of social interaction in which commitment is experientially far less salient. Simple social conformity – as the name implies – offers a means for social cohesion – a social script from which individuals can – if necessary – disengage themselves (e.g. via what Erving Goffman (1961) called “role distance”¹⁰⁹) while the former type of social conformity provides the actual magnetic north for the self. This way of looking at interactional dynamics, while not at all new, opens up new and interesting questions, questions that the early pioneers of social conformity already engaged (e.g. Asch 1955; Asch 1956; Elms and Milgram 1966; Milgram 1974). What happens, for example, when the relative ratio of secure and insecure selves in particular structural settings changes? Are there particular tipping points when a majority of secure selves in an authoritarian matrix can actually impose shifts in the VBS prototype (e.g. during initial stages of democratic revolutions, before basic processes of simple social conformity begin to kick back in again). In other words, can the strength of the secure self – congealed by structural bridges – ignite changes in collective VBS scripts and if so, how exactly does that happen?

¹⁰⁹ For Goffman “role distance” fulfills – among other things – a “defensive function” (Goffman 1961:112).

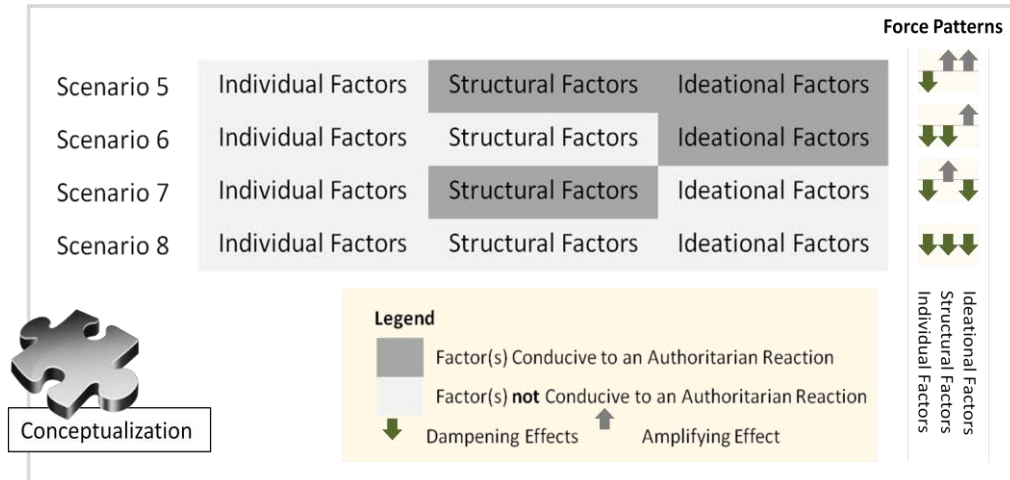


Figure 7: Scenario Set II and Its Interactional Force Pattern

Preliminary insights for this view come from classic studies on prisoners of war (e.g. Schein 1961; Schein 1956) or work on authoritarian religious movements (see Photiadis and Schweiker 1970; Zablocki 1997; Zablocki, Franks, and Smith 1999). Often steeped within a heated (and now somewhat cooled) debate on “brainwashing” – with one camp insisting on its actual potency (e.g. by focusing on the power of structural, ideational or psychotropic forces) and the other vehemently discounting such a possibility (e.g. by focusing more on individual predispositions), these studies seem to indicate that authoritarian matrices can induce VBS shifts in some individuals while not in others. While the VBS-based model proposed here (see chapter 5 and Figure 8) remains highly speculative, it not only demonstrates the utility of a stronger analytical separation of the three major forces but also offers a possible conceptual peace treaty for this theoretical trench war. It suggests, for example, that the activation of authoritarian scripts is not inevitable but strongly contingent upon the plasticity and nature of personal identity standards (with some being more conducive to change than

others). Personal VBS identity standards, also play perhaps an even bigger role as the influence of structural forces begins to diminish (see scenario 6 in Figure 7). Subject to the social magnetism of “elective affinities” (VBS topologies that induce equilibrating forces), the secure self will then likely be drawn toward social environments that provide more expansive VBS prototypes and opportunities for VBS equilibration. How strong VBS differences can be before VBS shifts become unlikely or impossible remains, however, an open empirical question. Given the current understanding in the literature on trait and value stability, it seems, plausible that as biological plasticity decreases with age (especially past certain development milestones) the window for possible shifts may begin to slowly contract. Nevertheless, given the larger initial experiential comfort zone (and thus the larger range of plausible VBS combinations that can be accommodated), the “secure self” - as Skitka et al. (2002) have rightly observed – will probably be less threatened by mismatching VBSs (also see Table 2). Put differently, the secure self may either be able to equilibrate with a broader range of VBSs and/or boast a wider VBS orbit that ease demands of strict VBS synchronization (e.g. hence this suggests a spectrum from more immature to more mature forms of the secure self. More on this later ...)

While the first two scenarios helped to (partially) illuminate ideational settings conducive to authoritarian phenomena, scenarios 7 and 8 (see Figure 7), in contrast, explore situations in which VBS P-S-ISs more or less match. Hence, an important conceptual question in this theoretical discussion involves: what happens when structural factors manage to chain the secure self to ideationally-congruent matrixes

(scenario 7). While structural factors in this scenario will probably maintain a tight VBS equilibrium between the individual and the “matrix” (and thus amplify the salience of the structural entity), since ideational *and* individual factors are acting as inhibitory forces, it seems unlikely that these environmental realities can trigger strong authoritarian phenomena. While the temporal calculus of structural forces may create and condition a set of social conformity heuristics, social conformity alone – especially in the *absence* of more powerful ideational scripts for prejudice, discrimination, intolerance and/or build-in ideational threat templates/amplifiers – will probably not succeed in inducing authoritarian aggression and/or manufacturing insecure selves. Counterforces originating from the depths of the self (e.g. the greater capacity to tolerate differences and/or ambiguities and the stronger uneasiness with order and unquestioning stances toward authority and norms) complemented by stronger ideational shock absorbers (e.g. humanist VBSs that enshrine motivational opportunity structures for self-actualization or self-transcendence) should provide a fairly effective buffer system against authoritarianism. While strong VBS threats may induce a range of defensive *transitory* mechanisms like the intensification of centripetal forces toward the VBS prototype, the creation of stronger temporary authority structures and a more consistent endorsement of social conformity, it seems fairly unlikely that this constellation will produce more extreme forms of authoritarian aggression (e.g. prejudice, hostility toward out-groups etc.). Even in cases where the social self becomes highly salient (e.g. via structural processes and/or VBS overlap), in the absence of effective ideational narratives to vent and sustain the fire of authoritarian flames, the

extinguishing properties of the individual-ideational tango should make a fairly adequate fire management team.

Partial support for this rationale comes again from research on left-wing authoritarianism (e.g. Fromm 1929/1984; Rokeach 1960; Stone and Smith 1993) in which scholars have found that *ideationally* more committed individuals (e.g. secure selves in Humanist ideational matrices?) tend to exhibit much lower authoritarian tendencies than individuals that are only *structurally* integrated into left-wing environments (e.g. insecure selves in a Humanist ideational bubble?). Likewise, longitudinal work on intergroup beliefs suggests that while intergroup beliefs are acquired early and strong in-group favoritism does exist in young children (e.g. possibly related to the developmental evolution of role perspective-taking processes?), these “predispositions” not only become tempered as the child enters adolescence but there also seems little to no evidence for out-group derogation among younger children (e.g. Stangor and Leary 2006)¹¹⁰. In tune with the work of the early pioneers of authoritarianism, this research suggests that it may be much more productive to seek the structural-ideational origins of particular intergroup beliefs conducive to authoritarian templates (also see Table 2).

This simple – yet inherently intuitive – logic should apply even more to classic “non-authoritarian” constellations (see scenario 8 in Figure 7). It is here where individual, structural and ideational factors coexist in a *functional harmony* to produce

¹¹⁰ Which seems to suggest that out-group derogation is neither an inborn human “trait” nor an inevitable outcome of group dynamics but constitutes a mere set of scripts that are acquired via developmental forces that carve out the aspects of our self (e.g. in a Merleau-Ponty sense).

realities that should be completely non-conducive to the development of authoritarian phenomena. The last statement comes of course with a small caveat: if threats against the self and the structural entity (e.g. “group”) are so strong that they begin to overtax the capacity of the intricate buffer system, it seems likely that scenario 8 would revert to a scenario 7 (see Figure 7).

A Few Tentative Insights from the “New” Holistic Model

Trying to walk a delicate tightrope between dilapidating repetitiveness and the need for summation, the last part of this chapter will discuss what the dissertation may (or may not have) accomplished. It is important to point out that the author embarked on this project with the naïve (yet very strong) belief that it would be possible to bring some sort of order to the conceptual “chaos” in the literature. The prolonged spelunking in these mysterious (yet fascinating) authoritarian cave systems – while not having led to a new grand narrative – has nevertheless provided a number of valuable insights. The “new” framework, for example, has led to a much stronger clarification of the construct and helped to further illuminate the dimensionality, depth and complexity involved in these phenomena. Having taken authoritarianism apart – like a mechanical watch in the hands of a curious child with the urge to *know*¹¹¹ – the theoretical disassembly revealed a number of interrelated parts and/or patterns. Authoritarianism – as the early theorists had already found – seems to constitute a subtle and often highly orchestrated interplay

¹¹¹ And then having had to succumb to the frustrations of not being able to put it back together ... which is not only a true story but also a somewhat obsessive-compulsive pattern of that – now somewhat older – child ... but then this is a different story for a different time.

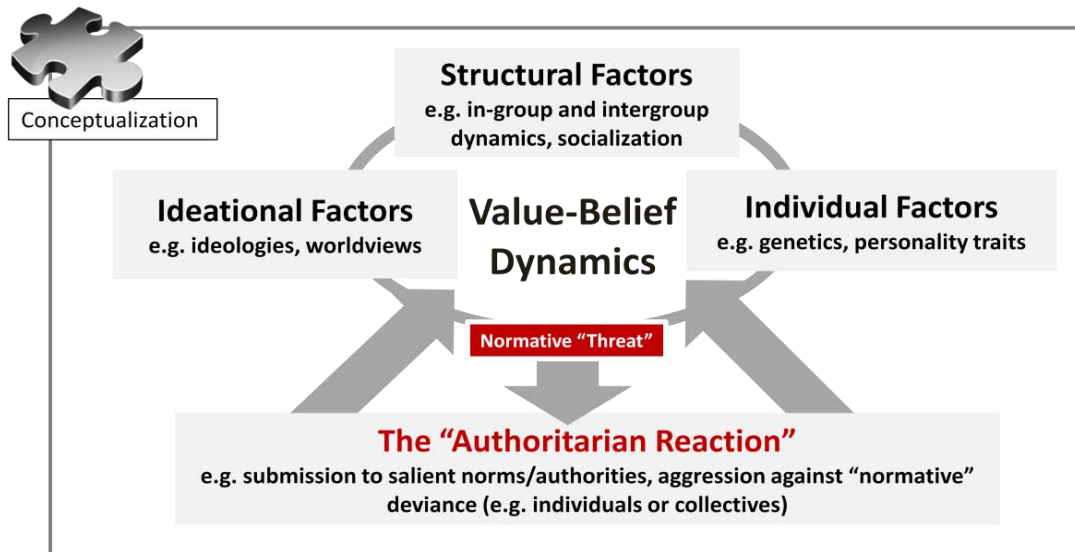


Figure 8: The “New”, More Holistic Model of the “Authoritarian Constellation”¹

between individual, structural and ideational factors – an interactional flame that is kindled, fanned and/or squelched by salience and threat processes. Authoritarianism thus seems best conceived as a chronic or transient “constellation” or “alignment” of particular forces. The “authoritarian reaction” should therefore be seen as nothing but an *experiential equilibration mechanism*.

To understand how the authoritarian “clock” runs and what part the individual self plays in it, the dissertation tried to marshal up an eclectic cast of conceptual themes, all of which – one way or another – congeal around the issue of value belief systems. To bring these important ideas to fruition, the following elaborations will briefly illuminate the inner workings of the *authoritarian trinity* (individual, structural and ideational forces) *as well as* the catalytic role of salience and threat dynamics. It aims to show that it this interactive system which makes authoritarianism what it is: a self-perpetuating system of sameness, insecurities and uncertainties that –

via a “stroke of genius” – is being experienced by the individual self as a bastion of security, certainty and meaning in a dangerous and threatening circus of foaming nihilism.

The Authoritarian Trinity

The cocktail of factors that ignite the authoritarian fireworks reflects – as has been argued at length – joint productions. To single out one or two performers in it would mean to do injustice to the complex scripts of the authoritarian universe. However, a few generalizations can be risked. Insecure selves, for example, seem – within yet-to-be-determined biological limits – creations and/or manifestations of particular ideational-structural matrices (see Table 2 again). Since the individual self reflects essentially a biosocial piece of art, it seems paramount to look at the range and nature of artistic supplies (e.g. in form of values and beliefs) that are available to the “artist”. Art depends on access and steady supply of materials (e.g. shaped by structural forces) as well as the availability of certain materials (e.g. limited by the nature of the VBS landscapes in the structural matrix). The personal value-belief system (a the piece of art) thus reflects not only an artistic expression of the ideational landscape but also structural constraints (e.g. maybe the artist just didn’t want to drive across town to get red paint so s/he settled for green and rationalized it as the “perfect” color).

Transcending the limitations of this metaphor, however, it seems fairly save to argue that certain value-belief systems ignite narrative staccatos (e.g. via promotion of threat, danger, sin, order, conformity and/or uncertainty) that eat – over time – holes into the mental “rock” of individuals and/or collectives. The *experiential realities* that

certain value-belief systems *encapsulate and induce* can – within biological limits – therefore create an army of insecure drones that will quasi-voluntarily march into (and – with all their might – help uphold) structural-ideational arrangements that soothe their felt insecurities, appease their existing anxieties and provide phenomenological environments that are less ambiguous, more ordered and experientially impoverished.

Conservative ideologies (especially social conservatism) with their focus on stability, status quo, hierarchical intergroup beliefs and tradition as well as religious fundamentalism which thrives on moral absolutisms, conformity demands and discouragements of genuine intergroup contacts, are – as the empirical evidence has overwhelmingly shown – especially attractive to the insecure self. Value-belief systems, however, are not only amplified, perpetuated and maintained at the biosocial level (e.g. via shifts in the personality identity standards) but also via subtle (and not so subtle) forces emanating from structural factors. The degree of structural encapsulation (interactional intensity and frequency with “out-groups”, nature of ritualistic demands put on the individual etc.), for example, cannot only further crystallize existing VBS personal identity standards but also impoverish and restrict access to VBS diversity (which could broaden the horizons for possible identity shifts). In other words, the “value fit” between personal and social value priorities – especially for the insecure self – constitutes a precondition for psychological functioning (e.g. Triandis 1990; Triandis 1989). Since the VBS dynamics of the authoritarian trinity produces constellations that cater toward the underlying experiential “needs” and/or socially-induced “needs” (motifs) – as Rohan (2000) has rightly observed – “behaving in ways that are in line with

... [the group's] value priorities *is in line* ... with ... the value priorities [of the insecure self]" (266). But then, this is really old news to the founding fathers who have consistently, eloquently and convincingly argued that authoritarianism provides the self with a socially-constructed crutch for life in a standby mode (e.g. Allport 1954; Fromm 1941).

Authoritarian Reactions and the Issue of Salience

Salience within various traditions of authoritarian research often seems assumed and/or attributed to individual and/or structural factors (and to far lesser degree to ideational dynamics). The new model, however, resurrects older notions by arguing that none of the existing accounts can provide satisfactory answers to the nature of salience creation, salience maintenance and/or salience dissipation. Salience, as it conceived here, reflects an underlying VBS mismatch between the personal and a social identity (or identities) – a mismatch that via structural and ideational amplifiers helps to weave the individual into a particular social fabric. Since structural factors mainly create and/or maintain dynamic VBS equilibria¹¹², structural arrangements (e.g. a group) become only attractive to the degree that they can provide VBSs that cater toward the *existential "needs"* of the individuals (as enshrined by the individual's own personal identity standard). Salience, however, can also be created in situ via mere structural processes (e.g. structural encapsulation, commitment demands), but this only occurs within the

¹¹² While the discussion has mainly focused passive adjustments to existing VBS(s) of the "matrix", the model does also offer theoretical openings to discuss more active processes (e.g. the individual acting back upon the structural-ideational arrangements and thus creating "new" realities). However, this aspect – while important in the conception of dynamic equilibria – was beyond the scope of the dissertation. It does, however, provide an interesting starting point for further theory integration.

limits set out by the personal identity standard. Likewise, ideational factors such as hierarchical intergroup beliefs (e.g. justification of the status quo) or in-group beliefs (e.g. promotion of stronger in-group pride) provide prescriptive and proscriptive scripts that not only enhance and strengthen the in-group status but also help inoculate the identity standard with a set of ad-hoc and post-hoc rationalizations that immunizes the individual against certain types of threat.

For example, as Roccas (2005) has rightly observed about religious socialization (e.g. a quasi-authoritarian setting), these temporal matrices encourage

“the adoption of value priorities that express and support the theological doctrines and interests of religious institutions. Thus, the more a person is committed to religion, the more likely he is to accept values endorsed by his religious group ... Individuals’ value priorities may [thus] lead them to become more or less religious depending on the extent to which religion offers opportunities to pursue ... valued goals” (757).

While individuals tend to join groups that reinforce their salient identities (Stryker, Yardley, and Honess 1987), and while salient identities can predict time commitments (Stryker and Serpe 1982), this view of niche-seeking and/or salience seems to only half of the story. Since salience of social identities often intertwines with the self concept – especially in insecure individuals – VBS equilibration processes may lead individuals to become more “radical” and their attitudes as well as beliefs more attuned with those of the prototypical in-group member (some evidence in Abrams and Hogg 1988; Turner 1987). Pressure for reconciling the “satisfaction of their own value priorities with conformity to others” (Allport 1955) thus seems to differ for the insecure

and secure self with the former having a substantially higher “need” for an intra-psychic equilibrium and smaller VBS orbital deviations (also see Figure 3).

But then, how exactly does salience relate to the “authoritarian reaction”? While salience is often conceived in terms of structural factors (and meanings), the “new” framework suggests that structural contingencies are effective precisely because they directly (or indirectly) impinge on the ideational thermodynamics of the self. Since insecure selves often seem to have more simplistic identity structures and more narrow personal identity standards, the self system seems to create a compositional entity that lends itself much more to a fusion (or strong overlap) between personal and social value-belief systems. Salience thus should be seen as a mere *biosocial* strife that, via structurally-controlled VBS equilibration processes, can provide the insecure self with a quasi-secure *phenomenological* reality. Since this equilibrium – due to the inherently schizophrenic nature of these VBS systems (e.g. ideational narratives that fan the experiential angst of individuals but - then somewhat divinely – provide structural means to soothe them) – is highly fragile, any belief that the VBS system is under threat should be experienced as a threat against the entire self (or, more accurately, the merged personal-social self that experientially grounds the individual). Threats thus create ripples in the VBS space continuum that can (and will) set off compensatory mechanisms.

Defensive processes within the authoritarian universe can range from “authoritarian conformity” (e.g. increased conformity to the VBS prototype of the structural arrangement and thus to the norms and authorities that safeguard it) to

“authoritarian aggression” (e.g. prejudice, discrimination or more overt forms of hostility). Since in-situ defense portfolios are not a random and/or constant process but should reflect the particular realities of individual-structural-ideational matrices, it is useful to have one last look at the intricacies of threat dynamics.

Authoritarian Reactions, Threat and Experiential Monocultures

The role, nature and consequences of threat in authoritarian phenomena – as the previous chapters should have amply documented - have received strong attention within the scholarship on authoritarianism. While the original contributors of the concept (e.g. Allport 1954; Fromm 1929/1984; Fromm 1936) have proposed multifactorial scenarios for heightened threat susceptibilities, contemporary theorists often try to advance more reductionist frameworks. The “new” model here, however, strongly sides with the founding fathers by pushing an interactionist account that builds on elective-affinity-creating VBS dynamics. The more holistic framework stresses that the observed threat susceptibilities cannot (and should not) be reduced to individual and/or structural factors but must be understood as an emergent property of *all three factors*. Value-belief systems, for example, can create either ideational threat buffers (e.g. humanist ideologies) or ideational threat amplifiers (e.g. normative ideologies). By harping on Hobbesian core beliefs and continuously promoting threat narratives, for example, particular ideational systems not only help to reify “threat” but advance it to an experiential leitmotif. Normative VBSs with their much stronger emphasis on stability, security, uncertainty avoidance, and moral absolutism stifle – at least indirectly

(if not directly) – independent thought and/or category differentiation processes (e.g. in the normative realm). By constraining the intellectual terrain *a-priori* and by collapsing available experiential vocabularies into more restrictive dualisms (e.g. right/wrong, black/white), these VBSs produce *intellectual and experiential monocultures* that present a fertile ground for authoritarian phenomena to arise.

Given these complexities, it almost borders on intellectual sabotage to relegate the prevalence of low levels of openness to new experience and threat sensitivities among “authoritarians”, conservatives and/or religious fundamentalists to the “biological” and/or psychological realm¹¹³. Authoritarian phenomena and the emergence of authoritarian reactions, however – as should be more than clear by now – cannot (and should not) be explained simply by referring to (genetically-driven) niche-seeking processes but should include ideational and structural impacts that carve out unique biological and psychological landscapes. The experiential realities that value-belief systems encapsulate are likely to translate into particular socialization dynamics – e.g. those that limit exposure to “normative” novelty. Some of the current models in behavioral genetics (e.g. the additive model) and/or trait psychology thus are intellectually counterproductive because they not only tend to under-conceptualize complex structural and ideational dynamics but also ail from flawed – often highly circular – assumptions (as noted in chapter 4).

The alleged genetic foundation of observed IQ differences between liberals versus conservatives and atheists versus religious fundamentalists, for example, (to harp

¹¹³ This is not to say that biological and/or genetic factors are unimportant – as should have been clear from the previous scenario discussions.

again on the most ludicrous act of secular extremism of the *Church of Evolutionary Psychology* (Kanazawa 2010))¹¹⁴, can – if the empirical evidence for these pattern withstands the scrutiny of a rigorous reanalysis – probably be explained by adequately by impoverished learning environments (e.g. environments that discourage independent inquiry and/or stress norm compliance) or structural-ideational socialization trajectories that perpetuate certain reinforcement contingencies. The brain as an inherently plastic, environmentally responsive product of evolution, probably does not get the necessary environmental stimuli in these impoverished environments to develop biological infrastructures capable of adequately dealing with stimulus diversity and/or develop the ability for more subtle category differentiation heuristics (with respect to *certain* experiential dimensions). In short, the observed threat sensitivities, the existence of experiential deserts, the psychological rigidity that flows from them as well as the stronger endorsement of authoritarian reactions by insecure selves should be seen as an elaborate plot of the authoritarian trinity.

Summary Blues

The discussion of the “new” model via a sequence of hypothetical scenarios and their consequences have provided partial support for the “old” wisdom that “authoritarian phenomena” emerge through an interactional dance. It has tried to

¹¹⁴ Main stream evolutionary biology and evolutionary psychology have provided fascinating insights into the origins of social behavior and thus have provided an invaluable service to the advancement of science. However, whenever an academic discipline turns “fundamentalist” in that it tries to explain highly complex (and often strongly derivative) phenomena with the use a few simple narratives (e.g. reproductive fitness, gene transmission and the nature of gene pools) combined with little to no real empirical evidence one needs to wonder about the claims made by such a tradition.

provide – at times highly speculative – answers to questions that current models of authoritarianism often have trouble adequately explaining. Using the “new” VBS-based framework it seems, for example, that it now has become possible to provide at least tentative explanations as to: (1) why certain types of individuals are disproportionately drawn into *particular* structural and/or ideological arrangements (as opposed to “some”), (2) how and why particular social identities become more salient for certain types of individuals and not for others, (3) in what ways salience propensities are built into collective value-belief matrices (and the structural and ideational systems that cohere around them), (4) why threat and salience are such important factors in creating authoritarian reactions, (5) how documented “elective affinities” (and the thematic similarities that exist among factors) can be explained more parsimoniously via VBS dynamics, (6) how threat perceptions are socially constructed by dynamic yet semi-stable structural-ideational amplifiers and/or dampeners, (7) why certain types of individuals – within particular temporal structural-ideational arrangements – may acquire certain core values and beliefs (as opposed to “some”), and (8) why certain structural-ideational landscapes produce more secure selves while others develop into biosocial fermentation flasks that nourish the insecurities of the insecure self.

The attentive reader has of course long realized that history has a way of “repeating” itself. Because once one strips the “new” model from all its “new” concepts and terminology, once one transcends the hegemony of structural-symbolic interactionist insights, the patronage of social identity theory, the insights of behavioral genetics and/or the dictatorship of trait psychology (to name just a few “recent”

developments), it becomes apparent that the “new” framework constitutes nothing but a “refurbished” version of the classic models of the founding fathers: models that in their own elegance, brilliance and complexity not only contained all the necessary ingredients for the understanding of authoritarianism but often outperformed more contemporary models. But back to the summary.

The dissertation up until chapter 6 has tried to perform a series of intellectual summersaults in the vain attempt to “prove” the common notion that authoritarianism reflects an exclusive “invention” of “the right” (e.g. Altemeyer 1981; Stone and Smith 1993)¹¹⁵. To the disappointment of this writer, however, the vendetta has only partially succeeded. The myriad of interactional variations that can emerge from the logic of the authoritarian trinity and the “new” self-based conceptual framework complicates the picture substantially. While the conventional wisdom holds for more extreme forms of authoritarian submission and aggression, it becomes much fuzzier once one re-introduces the concept of *functional* social conformity (and aggression). While more “liberal” ideational and structural arrangements should create stronger build-in anti-authoritarian buffers (e.g. produce more secure selves, minimize hostile intergroup scripts, provide structural-ideational outlets for compensatory mechanisms, vaccinate individuals with a more positive worldview and views on human nature), it is not altogether clear if certain constellations could not under conditions of extreme threat and/or high salience, for example, produce at least more moderate “authoritarian” reactions (e.g. with subdued forms of aggression and/or moderate acceptance of

¹¹⁵ This rendition, while strongly informed by the empirical findings in the literature, probably reflects the ideological blinders of the author.

authoritarian structural arrangements). It remains an interesting question – which of course other authors from different theoretical vantage points have already struggled with (e.g. Rokeach 1960) – to what extent even “secure” selves, especially when they are few social identities¹¹⁶ - can become susceptible to strong and/or milder versions of authoritarian-like (or authoritarian) phenomena.

It seems that the only true vaccine against authoritarianism of any kind (which could involve non-political and non-religious forms) seems a secure self with a highly diversified social identity portfolio. Only under the protectorate of *this* diversification process (and the resulting competing VBS pressures as well as the lower incentives to rely exclusively on a social identities for self-definition), does it seem possible to ward off and/or prevent any serious identity (VBS) threats. By creating a compositional salience pattern in which salience is more evenly spread across different social identities, attacks against one social identity and/or set of social identities should have a much lower impact because they are not experienced as threats against the entire self. This also implies that a more secure self that gets too carried away with the lures that a salient social identity can provide (an immature secure self?) may develop quasi-authoritarian predispositions. These insights, of course, are really not new to the brilliant minds of the past. People like Erich Fromm, Erik Erickson or the members from the Frankfurt school (e.g. Adorno, Frenkel-Brunswik, Levinson, and Sanford 1950; Horkheimer 1931) – to name just a few – have already argued that the only true way out

¹¹⁶ For example, individuals that have few social identities which become (structurally) so salient that they start to overshadow, undermine or suppress the existence of others and/or limit the capacity to accommodate new ones.

of this current “mess” – whereby the “authoritarian specter”¹¹⁷ represents only its more extreme form – lies in a experiential coup d'etat that rewrites the actual (and perceived) VBS realities for the personal self. Freedom is frightening and the bandages that the social self can provide are not only comforting but addictive. However, as Fromm (1941) so brilliantly remarked:

“[G]rowing freedom doesn't not [sic] constitute a vicious circle[!] man can be free and yet not alone, critical and yet not filled with doubts, independent and yet and be integral part of mankind. *This* freedom man can attain by the *realization of the self* ... [which] is accomplished not only by an act of thinking but also by the realization of man's total personality, by the active expression of his emotional and intellectual potentialities ... [T]he uniqueness of the self, however, in no way contradicts the principle of equality. ... all [of us] share the same fundamental human qualities ... [we] have the same inalienable claim on freedom and happiness. ... [and thus our relationship with one another should be] *one of solidarity, and not one of domination-submission.*“ (257-264)

Hence, *once* social identities no longer provide the gravitational center for the self but the VBS of the true self has finally awakened from the long (prescribed) slumber, *once* irrational authority relations have been replaced by predominately rational ones (those capable of outgrowing the current sadomasochistic fascination with the status quo)¹¹⁸ and *once* social conformity no longer fulfills a functional necessity for the self but provides merely a page in the social etiquette of humanity that aids, guides and directs rational human interactions – *once that day* has arrived maybe brighter days

¹¹⁷ This is Altemeyer's (1996) descriptive term of the phenomena.

¹¹⁸ Fromm (1936, 1946) makes the useful analytical distinction between *irrational authority* structures (structures mainly geared toward a state of perpetual dependency) and *rational authority* relations (which constitute not only temporary arrangements but also relations that are aimed toward the mutual benefits of the interactants). Fromm's idealtype for the latter was the teacher-student relationship.

are ahead for our species. But, as long as the blazing fire of self-denying demagogy (so prevalent in certain in particular structural-ideational matrices) continues to intellectually disown individuals millennia after millennia ... *authoritarianism – in all its forms and “splendor” – will seem as “natural”, “rational” and “inevitable” as the “need” for a cup of coffee early in the morning ...*

Chapter 7: Of Ends and New Beginnings

“[What] then is truth? A movable host of metaphors, metonymies, and anthropomorphisms: in short, a sum of human relations which have been poetically and rhetorically intensified, transferred, and embellished, and which, after long usage, seem to a people to be fixed, canonical, and binding. *Truths are illusions which we have forgotten are illusions....*” (Nietzsche 1873).

The current interdisciplinary landscape with its little isolated academic communities tucked away on remote mountain tops and/or in secluded valleys communicating via postmodern smoke signs constitutes a setup that is not only ineffective, slow and restrictive but also utterly incapable of handling the explosion of scientific information in today’s world¹¹⁹. Nurtured by an intellectual climate that seems to idolize the corrosive powers of a quasi-laissez-faire approach to knowledge production, the structural conditions are not only perfect for a slow and perpetual meme drift but the self-imposed ideational isolation that comes with it may eventually lead to an academic cataclysm that will pale the biblical myth of the Tower of Babel. Recognizing – as Nietzsche (1873) so eloquently and convincingly has – that “truth” (of any kind) reflects nothing but a set of “human relations which have been poetically and rhetorically intensified, transferred, and embellished” – in short a “host of metaphors”, the ultimate question for science may simply lie in the perennial quest for a set of ever-

¹¹⁹ This – of course – is nothing but hyperbole ... but then it serves its purpose.

more-inclusive and/or predictive metaphors of (social) reality (while setting aside any claims to the actual veracity of these narratives). This means that the reified reality captured in all models, metaphors and/or narratives need to become again the subject to a new collective “hermeneutics of suspicion”. Creating a second enlightenment project that fights the inherently destructive potential of the current scientific “hyperspecialization” – a danger the scholars of the Frankfurt School (see, for example, Horkheimer 1931) were already so keenly aware of –not only requires a new, *more centralized structural platform* for scientific endeavors but also necessitates a conceptual Esperanto that enables scholars from different epistemological and academic traditions to communicate more effectively¹²⁰. Hence the goal has to be a much stronger centralization and integration of knowledge before any diversification should be pursued any further. Many of the ideas (or metaphors) to describe complex social phenomena probably already exist somewhere in the vast libraries of human knowledge. So rather than simply brushing over these hidden gems and/or ignoring the wisdom of the ages because of (often) assumed conceptual and terminological incompatibilities, it seems much more fruitful to find similarities among the already

¹²⁰ While the ultimate contours of this new conceptual “Esperanto” are still shrouded in the mysteries of the future, one thing seems already clear: *it won't look anything like evolutionary psychology*. To meet the ludicracy of “certainty” exuded by some – especially those from the more radical wings of this “church” and their authoritarian drones – with a mockery of certainty – let's just say this: The new secular gospel that claims to have genesis accounts for everything from an individual's perfume preferences to the “naturalness” of gender income differences – will eventually have to succumb to the very same forces that it worships as its “totemic principle”: “natural” selection. In a few decades from now these misguided academic visionaries will either have *adapted* to the new selective pressures or their memes will have entered the academic fossil record ... in style – as beautiful “evolutionary” dead-ends that have had their socio-cultural moments (and we all applaud) but that in the grander scheme of things don't really matter. So, may the troubled souls of these memes rest in peace!

existing frameworks and reduce the terminological wild-west to a set of more manageable scientific “dictionaries”.

The Authoritarian Constellation: A Few Final Comments

So in a very humble ... and perhaps amateurish execution ... this dissertation has tried to heed the challenge posed by other brilliant minds by sketching out a number of possible conceptual and empirical bridges. The “new” interpretive framework does not claim to provide answers as much as it tries to invite other scholars to further pursue and institutionalize a *truly open* interdisciplinary dialogue (for existing attempts see CFIR, NAS, NAE, and IM 2005; Kagan 2009; Karanika-Murray and Wiesemes 2009; Lattuca 2001; von Scheve and von Luede 2005). By having crossed – as this dissertation did – such diverse (yet inherently arbitrary and artificial) territory as political science, psychology, sociology, social psychology, political psychology, cultural studies, cognitive neuroscience, developmental psychology, evolutionary biology, behavioral genetics, philosophy, social anthropology and/or biological anthropology, the proposed synthesis, of course, is not only muddled in a myriad of assumptions (each of which could easily be deconstructed) but also possibly entails a host of theoretical misappropriations, potentially questionable critiques of the literature and/or dangerous theoretical overgeneralizations. The reader, however, is being asked to see past these minor (or even major) blemishes in the model (and the dissertation) and consider the broader theoretical implications and merits that may come with this more holistic analysis. In other words, the dissertation challenges the reader to conceive of a theoretical vista

from which the landscapes have become more important than the flowers that grow along the valleys. While the “new” framework does not constitute a sociological theory of relativity in which changes in perspectives predict changes in the nature and perceptions of reality, it does try to tear down some of the existing conceptual ambiguities and broaden theoretical horizons. It is with this theoretical shift, that scholars may not only be able to see formerly invisible processes but also begin to ask new questions – questions that in other, more limited paradigms may have appeared irrelevant.

The conceptual archeology on which this dissertation revolves, however, does neither constitute a qualitative meta-analysis nor a comprehensive overview of the vast body of literature on authoritarianism. It represents simply a pilgrimage to the field sites of academic ingenuity: the equivalent – so to speak – of a 14-day package tour around Europe that takes you to the sights and sounds of foreign lands but never actually lets you to delve deeper into the complexities and subtleties that make each culture unique. And while such an intellectual adventure – be it in academia or on a Eurotrail train – can leave the individual utterly unsatisfied on multiple accounts, it is the strong conviction of this author that a journey like that still creates meaningful impressions that can profoundly challenge existing notions of how the world works. Hence, embracing the theoretical nostalgia that comes with any summary (and thus the end of a journey) but remaining keenly aware of the “death by repetition” that just lurks around the corner, the conclusion of this dissertation will therefore be short, unorthodox and – to some – probably fairly unsatisfying. Those who would like to relive particular moments of the

theoretical saga are encouraged to return to the snapshots of each chapter as well as to the more detailed discussions in chapters 5 and 6. What this conclusion will do, however, is to hit on some important insights and provide a few waypoints for anyone who would like to set out on a future geocaching adventure. So, let's start with the obvious and then transition to the less obvious: What is authoritarianism? Is authoritarianism a meaningful construct? And, if so – how does it differ from seemingly related constructs? And what are some questions that remain unanswered in the wide open spaces of academic ignorance?

Authoritarianism – for the lack of a better definition – is probably best conceived as an emergent property of a highly complex system that involves individual, structural and ideational factors. It represents a phenomenon that emerges under particular interactional constellations – constellations that are particularly tied to the existence, creation and/or maintenance of insecure selves. Authoritarianism – like the phase transition from water to ice¹²¹ – cannot be reduced to a single factor, but should be conceived as a systemic property (of multiple forces: individual, structural and/or ideational factors) that gets primed under certain contingencies. Understanding the nature of value belief systems – these biosocial biographies which help characterize, delimit and enshrine *particular experiential comfort zones* as well as provide intimate accounts of the temporal vagaries of individuals and collectives – seems especially crucial in this respect. Value belief systems – as abstract conceptual metaphors that

¹²¹ Metaphors are always limited in the degree to which they can capture “reality” (whatever that is). The author of this dissertation – of course – recognizes that the water-ice analogy paints a pretty passive picture of authoritarian phenomena. Authoritarianism does – of course – include a number of active elements (even if they are arguably much less important).

capture and transect the conscious *and* unconscious aspects of the authoritarian trinity – not only seem to provide a conceptual Esperanto but also a possible mechanism for a better understanding of “elective affinities”. Embracing the insights of structural symbolic interactionism, social identity theory and lacing them with the ideas of the value-belief concept – as the dissertation has tried to do – can help to re-conceptualize authoritarian phenomena in terms of VBS-driven self-dynamics. Here the lingo of identity standards, VBS thermostats and the logic of dynamic equilibria seem especially helpful because they aid in explaining as to why only certain constellations of the authoritarian trinity seem to create strong predispositions toward authoritarian reactions (e.g. submissive and aggressive tendencies) – predispositions that can be “situationally” triggered and amplified via threat and salience dynamics.

Seeing the authoritarian reaction – like the founding fathers did – as a set of defensive mechanisms that are *qualitatively and experientially different* from those involved in mere social conformity and/or situational aggression, the “new” VBS-based framework returns to the insights of older debates. If, as the “new” model has argued, authoritarianism constitutes a *systemic property* that either creates and/or perpetuates experientially-impooverished environments (e.g. especially with respect to idea, belief and value diversity) the question becomes as to whether power differentials exist in this system and/or under what conditions particular factors seem to take precedence. The classic ideational ether of the authoritarian cosmos, for instance, provides an inherently schizophrenic playground that – on the one hand – institutionalizes experiential dependencies, nurtures anxieties and distrust toward the “different”, the “unknown”,

the “new” and discourages the development of more “open” orientations toward the world, but, on the other hand, provides illusionary safety nets that cater toward biosocial “needs” and offer tickets (and/or membership cards) to certain structural-ideational Disneylands.

It is in these *New Jerusalems of Suppression and Domination* where concerns about safety, certainty, ambiguity and security are laid to rest and comforting post-hoc rationalizations (e.g. in form of intolerant, hierarchical and ingroup-aggrandizing intergroup belief systems) are handed out to show why these islands of pseudo-sanity *are and need to be* geographically, socially, culturally, politically, religiously and/or individually *bounded entities*. Hence, any assaults against value-belief systems that provide these experiential crutches - either in form of direct or indirect threats – are being perceived as threats *against the entire collective illusion, its members and the individual self*. Threats therefore create ripple effects that set off authoritarian reactions which – in turn – induce individual, structural and ideational recalibration processes that are geared toward the restoration and maintenance of the experiential space-time continuum. Social conformity to salient norms (which protect the VBS) and salient authorities thus not only constitute a functional necessity for the insecure self but also a functional prerequisite for structural and ideational adjustments (e.g. strong endorsement for structural changes such as the creation of homeland security and/or ideational changes such as the passing of the Patriot Act) that strengthen the value-belief system. By the same token, the more active side of the authoritarian reaction – authoritarian aggression – does not constitute an all-or-nothing response but takes on

different forms under different constellations. Since both aggression and submission comprise *two different approaches to the same challenge of re-equilibration* their actual manifestations and/or their relative mix does not simply reflect the nature of the threat and/or the degree of salience but – to a large (and possibly even larger) degree – relate to the *availability and nature of aggressive and submissive ideational scripts as well structural amplifiers*. This, of course, begs the question as to what degree a priming of this system can actually exist. More classic authoritarian reactions, it seems, may create *chronic low-level threat conditions* which initiate and maintain borderline levels of “authoritarian submission” as well lower the response thresholds levels for authoritarian aggression to occur.¹²²

While the discussion of authoritarianism here revolved mainly around the more “extreme” forms of authoritarianism (in part due to the ideological blinders and convictions of the author), the dissertation has also provided hints at the existence of other forms of authoritarianism (for similar arguments see Rokeach 1960). For example, the logic of the model reintroduces the possibility that other salience-threat dynamics – under certain constellations of the authoritarian trinity – can lead to authoritarian-like and/or authoritarian reactions. While the discussions in chapter 5 and 6 suggest that authoritarianism proper relates primarily to ideational and structural factors on the “right”, constellations in which the immature secure self (e.g. fragile social identity portfolios that lead to a salience amplification of one, few and/or overlapping social

¹²² This of course raises the question as to what “constellations” and dynamics may create more submissive as opposed to aggressive tendencies and/or whether submission is always a prerequisite (or antecedent) to aggressive stances. While SDO and RWA research and/or Fromm’s insights on the “sodomasochistic character” provide good starting points, the “new” VBS-based model broadens the importance of these question considerably.

identities) becomes structurally encapsulated in more humanist and/or liberal ideational matrices can probably also translate into authoritarian-like reactions. However, the nature of the VBSs in these matrices should not only put stronger dampeners on the emergence but – if this does occur – also temper their expressions. That being said, it seems important to note that authoritarian and authoritarian-like reactions – be they related to more “conventional” (e.g. religious and political manifestations) or more “neutral” domains such as social identities related to non-political matrices (e.g. a highly salient membership in a 4WD club that becomes threatened by a newly-passed environmental law disallowing four-wheeling in state parks) – will – in one way or another – always have to be seen in terms of embedded VBS self dynamics. The “extremity” of the authoritarian reactions thus may be best conceived as a dynamic continuum (with more extreme versions tied to more “extreme” VBSs and/or structural factors).

In sum (as chapter 6 has already tried to argued), it seems that one of the only few genuine vaccines against authoritarianism may lie in the nurturing of a truly secure self – especially one that entertains a highly diversified social identity portfolio. The effectiveness of this identity diversification process probably not only lies its ability to distribute salience patterns more equally across different social identities (and thus minimize threats against particular social identities) but also – with the help of structural-ideational patronage – in its capacity to induce a shift from externally-driven

definitions of the self to more internally-shaped constructions¹²³. “Authenticity” – rather than being a simple personal–social identity merger (which for Fromm of course leads to new forms of submission) – then becomes again tied to the strength, resilience and experience of the personal self.

Where to go from here ...

Having hopefully helped to return the authoritarian concept to its “proper” place within the conceptual pantheon – as the multi-faceted phenomenon that the founding fathers thought it to be – the question of course becomes: what now? If one – in form of a thought experiment – were to indulge into the rationale of this “new” framework, what potential consequences could (or would) this dissertation have for future research? This is a difficult question, so before rushing into a wild goose chase, it is important to remember that the model probably raises as many questions (or perhaps even more) than it hopes to answer. With that caveat in mind, future research could – apart from offering a necessary reality check for the author’s rendition of authoritarian phenomena – try to further illuminate the nature of value-belief dynamics, explore internal dynamics of these overarching interactional processes as well as expand the scope of theoretical integration in which this model is based.

Since the author strongly sides with recent calls for the intellectual revival of values and beliefs in the social sciences (e.g. Hitlin 2003; Hitlin and Piliavin 2004), one

¹²³ While the construction of the self is of course *always* social (see Hitlin 2003 wonderful work on this) and thus *one could* argue constitutes a project that by definition is an inherently externally-driven phenomena, there is a fine (but important) distinction that needs to be made. The self – can either be constructed via the unquestioning adoption of pre-manufactured narratives, identities and/or scripts *or* – in contradistinction (as Nietzsche or Fromm have argued) – via the creative adoption of linguistic and metaphorical categories to make sense of experiential realities.

possible avenue for future research on authoritarianism could lie in a further clarification and exploration of value-belief-based processes. The fact that values, beliefs and value-belief systems can transcend conscious and unconscious factors, capture biological, social and cultural facets of social life, permeate micro and macro processes, penetrate aspects of agency and structure as well as help condense complex experiential dynamics into more manageable constructs that make them ideal candidates for any attempts for interdisciplinary theory integration. Hence, while useful precursors for such a grand project already exist (e.g. Hofstede 2001; Rokeach 1973; Schwartz 1992), future research needs to develop a much more parsimonious conceptualization (and operationalization) of personal *and* collective aspects of value-belief dynamics.

While the dissertation has outlined a number of possible ways of how to go about this, prospective endeavors should build stronger bridges between sociology, psychology and neuroscience so as to show how micro-macro phenomena “congeal” within the world of values and beliefs. Rather than seeing value-belief systems as primarily rational constructions, however, future work should also try to illuminate how structural complexity, ideational scripts and biological realities *intersect* to create temporal dynamics of value-belief acquisition, maintenance and change. To untangle the elusive yet crucial trait-value problematique and anchor it more securely into the logic of structural-ideational matrices will not be an easy task. It will require the development of new and highly innovative longitudinal research designs – designs that can account for both niche-seeking *and* structural encapsulation processes. Creating a

stronger collaborative base for sociologists, social psychologists and developmental psychologists and neurobiologists would also help to shed more light on how brain plasticity, ideological content, structural realities and personal VBS identity standards interrelate. These efforts – in their ultimate expression – may also help to overcome the hegemony of the rational actor paradigm in the social sciences by helping to complement it more strongly with the wisdom and reality of a *rationalizing actor* paradigm. Such a step would also offer further incentives for theory integration as well as strengthen existing bridges with the fascinating literature of the sociology of emotions (e.g. Franks 2006; Kemper 1990; Lawler and Thye 1999; Turner and Stets 2005) and/or the various formulations of cognitive dissonance theory (e.g. Aronson 1992; Brehm and Cohen 1962; Cooper 2007; Festinger 1957; Gerard 1992).

The “new” framework also invites more holistic explorations of the authoritarian dilemma by studying tipping points, compositional changes (e.g. ratios of secure versus insecure selves within a given structural setting), structural complexities, multiple social identity dynamics and/or more intermediate interactional dynamics arising from the authoritarian trinity. The model also provides *renewed* incentives to explore (older) theoretical and empirical relationships between the *content* of value-belief systems (e.g. build-in threat amplifiers or novelty reduction dynamics), structural phenomena and individual manifestations. Interesting questions, for example include, to what degree structural factors can force VBS equilibria or what particular aspects of the structural-ideational matrix shape the biological plasticity of personal identity standards most affectively? In what ways does structural and ideational complexity affect multiple social

identity dynamics, and how does this resulting intra-psychic identity politics impinge on the likelihood of authoritarian phenomena? Moreover, the “new” model also raises questions as to whether there are “true” forms and “pseudo” forms of authoritarianism. In other words, does the authoritarian-like reaction of a secure self constitute an authoritarian reaction or not? Are individuals and/or collectives that espouse more Rosseauian value-belief systems as susceptible to authoritarian tendencies under certain conditions as those that subscribe to more Hobbesian and Spencerian views? While the “new” framework postulates slightly different dynamics for both insecure and secure selves, the good old nature-nurture dualism has not yet to been solved.

To answer these and other questions, future authoritarianism research would probably benefit from a much stronger engagement of existing work on ritual dynamics (e.g. Bell 1992; Collins 2004; Knottnerus, Markovsky, Lovaglia, and Troyer 1997; Turner 1995) and/or the sociology of religion and new religious movements (e.g. Anthony and Robbins 2004; Bainbridge 2008; Kilbourne and Richardson 1989; Robbins 1988; Zablocki, Franks, and Smith 1999). Both of these well-established traditions – albeit with different conceptual vocabularies and theoretical objectives – could offer complementary insights into issues of niche-seeking and structural encapsulation processes and thus help further clarify issues of salience, threat sensitivities as well as help differential dynamics arising from various interactional constellations. While the dissertation has primarily looked at the nature of insecure selves – especially with respect to particular (vary narrow) value-belief systems – future research should also try to explore more systematically how insecure selves deal with different VBSs (when forced to do so) and

how more secure selves deal with more restrictions in access to value-belief systems. Finally, future research may also want to consider if the proposed conceptualization of elective affinities (as well as the underlying mechanism) constitute a meaningful approach – and if so – how these insights could be applied to studies of other phenomena. While all of these ideas are nothing but suggestions, dim searchlights cast onto the vast space of possible research endeavors, they do capture some of the most important and most crucial directions that authoritarianism could (and probably should) take from here on

Having inherited and embraced the long tradition of critical scholarship in sociology and related fields, this dissertation – explicitly and/or implicitly – has tried to challenge the more defeatist renditions of the concept of authoritarianism that make it seem like a “natural” outcome of group processes, a quasi-biological inevitability and/or a price that humanity somehow had to pay for its own evolution as a species. In strong opposition to these views, the “new” model suggests that authoritarianism constitutes nothing but an emergent property of *particular constellations* and thus seems far from an inevitable condition. The conceptual framework, if empirically verifiable, thus would help reopen the seemingly deadlocked dialogue over what an authoritarian-free future – one that embraces VBS diversity and human differences – may actually look like. It also reminds us that the quest for certainty, meaning, understanding, security and/or experiential grounding that characterizes so much of the inner workings of the authoritarian cosmos – while intensified in these phenomena – does not reflect a human pathology but a choreography of deep-seating human needs (see for example

Baumeister and Leary 1995; Fromm 1959/1981; Smith 1992). Since needs, however, can be met in a variety of different ways – among which the authoritarian ticket is just one possibility – the real question becomes of how secure selves can be created.

Rather than regurgitating the limited insights that this dissertation has provided, the author will let Erich Fromm's intellectual mentor, Friedrich Nietzsche (1891/2008) and his protagonist have the final stage because it is in Zarathustra's wisdom that one can find an (although admittedly agential) glimpse of a better future; a future in which individuals and/or collectives no longer pervert the beauty of the "**Will to Power**" into submissive and/or domineering extravaganzas but channel "this drive" into a reflexive process of self-mastery and an unconditional and unwavering "Yes and Amen" to life:

"Man is a rope stretched between the animal and the Superman - a rope over an abyss. A dangerous crossing, a dangerous wayfaring, a dangerous looking-back ... [but then] ... I love the great despisers, because they are the great adorers ... arrows of longing for the other shore. I love those who do not first seek a reason beyond the stars for going down and being sacrifices, but sacrifice themselves to the earth ... I love him who liveth in order to know, and seeketh to know in order that the Superman may hereafter live ... I love him who laboureth and inventeth ... I love him who desireth not too many virtues. One virtue is more of a virtue than two, because it is more of a knot for one's destiny to cling to. I love him whose soul is lavish, who wanteth no thanks and doth not give back: for he always bestoweth, and desireth not to keep for himself. I love him who is ashamed when the dice fall in his favour, and who then asketh: "Am I a dishonest player?"- for he is willing to succumb. ... I love him whose soul is so overfull that he forgetteth himself, and all things are in him: thus all things become his down-going. ... I love all who are like heavy drops falling one by one out of the dark cloud that lowereth over man: they herald the coming of the lightning, and succumb as heralds.
Lo, I am a herald of the lightning, and a heavy drop out of the cloud: the lightning, however, is the Superman."

Thus Spake Zarathustra! But then ... is anyone really listening?

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VITA

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Abstract:

The dissertation grew out of a deep frustration with existing theoretical accounts of authoritarianism. Seeing strong interconnections and consistent patterns in the literature, the author began to explore the possibility of developing a more ecological framework. Stubbornly carrying the – now so seemingly – quaint “torch of the enlightenment”, the project set out with a brief conceptual archeology – a leisurely walk through the fascinating hall of fame in this long and well-established research tradition. Having identified four major conceptual themes that permeate the historical record (individual factors, structural factors, ideational factors and core values and beliefs), the dissertation then tried to advance a value-belief Esperanto capable of creating stronger connections among the factors. Using the wisdom of the past as well as the insights of a multi-conceptual cast – lenses as diverse as Weber’s concept of elective affinities, social identity theory, developmental psychology, Symbolic Interactionist thought and research on values and beliefs – it outlined a “new”, fairly unorthodox framework for the understanding of authoritarian self dynamics, observed affinities, associated threat and salience processes and/or the inner workings of the authoritarian reaction (the submissive and aggressive defensive mechanisms). To “show” that authoritarianism does not represent a “natural” outcome of group processes, a quasi-biological certitude and/or a value-added tax that humanity somehow had to pay for its own evolutionary tandrums but may be better conceived as an emergent property of particular interactional constellations (and thus seems far from an inevitable condition), the author explored a range of hypothetical scenarios. Recognizing the continued importance and implications of these phenomena in today’s world, the dissertation ends with a passionate call for further theory integration. It especially maintains that continuing to keep compiling “new” empirical information seems less fruitful than trying to analyze the already existing stock of knowledge. Once one transcends the terminological and conceptual Wild West, it becomes fairly obvious that it is not the pieces that are missing but a better way to put them together.

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