

Psychology 490
Fall Term 1999

Term Paper Assignment

The term paper is intended to encourage you to think about some concept(s) of political psychology. You could apply these concepts to the analysis and understanding of some concrete political or historical event. Or you could review the literature on some concept or topic that is especially interest to you – going beyond what was covered in class, or focusing on something that was not covered in class. The important thing is that you be *interested* in the topic of your paper. Feel free to discuss your ideas with Elisabeth or me.

Length: Approximately 10-15 pages, though covering your topic appropriately, and writing well, are much more important than length as such.

Due: At the ***beginning*** of class on **December 9**.

The following books, which give a broad overview of many different political psychology topics, will be on reserve soon:

- Hermann, M. G. (Ed.). (1986). *Political psychology*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Iyengar, S., & McGuire, W. J. (1993). *Explorations in political psychology*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Knutson, J. (Ed.). (1973). *Handbook of political psychology*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Kressel, N. J. (1993). *Political psychology: Classic and contemporary readings*. New York: Paragon House.
- Long, S. L. (Ed.). (1981). *The handbook of political behavior* (5 vols.). New York:
- Stone, W. F., & Schaffner, P. E. (1988). *The psychology of politics* (2nd ed.). New York: Springer-Verlag.

In addition, there are two journals that are especially likely to have interesting articles:

- *Political Psychology* [this is the journal of the International Society of Political Psychology; it is highly interdisciplinary]
- *Political Behavior* [its articles tend to have more of a “political science” approach]

Over the past few years, I have accumulated some references on a few particular topics, as shown below. These are *not* “privileged” topics; they are only suggestions. The important thing is to develop a topic that is of consuming interest to *you*.

1. Some aspects of war or international crises.

This could involve a political-psychological study of conflict and war in general, or of the conflict escalation (or peaceful resolution) process in a particular crisis or series of crises. I encourage you to consult primary materials.

The following edited books contain relevant articles and chapters about many different political-psychological aspects of conflict and war. They will be on reserve.

- White, R. K. (Ed.). (1986). *Psychology and the prevention of nuclear war*. New York: New York University Press.
- Glad, B. (1990). *Psychological dimensions of war*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications.

The following books and articles discuss connections between gender and war:

- Ehrenreich, B. (1997). *Blood rites: Origins and history of the passions of war*. New York : Metropolitan Books.
- Vickers, J. (1993). *Women and war*. Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Zed Books.
- Muir, K. (1992). *Arms and the woman*. London: Sinclair-Stevenson.
- Elshtain, J. B. (1987). *Women and war*. New York: Basic Books.
- Enloe, C. H. (1983). *Does khaki become you? Militarisation in women's lives*. Boston: South End Press. (UL: HQ115 .E5411 1983).
- Enloe, C. H. (1990). *Bananas, beaches, and bases : making feminist sense of international politics*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Coetzee, F., & Shevin-Coetzee, M. (Eds.). (1995). *Authority, identity and the social history of the Great War*. Providence, RI: Berghahn Books, 1995.

The following books and articles contain lists of “crises” that escalated, and did not escalate, to war:

- Richardson, L. F. (1960). *Statistics of deadly quarrels*. Pittsburgh and Chicago: Boxwood Press and Quadrangle Books. (Contains a list of all “wars” [with casualties ≥ 316] that ended between 1820 and 1945. A classic, though somewhat dated.)
- Wilkinson, D. (1980). *Deadly quarrels: Lewis F. Richardson and the statistical study of war*. Berkeley: University of California Press. (Attempts to refine Richardson and bring him up to date with a list of wars since 1945.)
- Brogan, P. (1990). *The fighting never stopped: A comprehensive guide to world conflict since 1945*. New York: Vintage Books. (Extremely useful list of conflicts since the end of World War II.)
- Suedfeld, P., & Tetlock, P. E. (1977). Integrative complexity of communications in international crises. *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 21, 169-183.
- Wright, Q. (1965). The escalation of international conflicts. *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 9, 434-449.
- Brecher, M. (1988) *Crises in the twentieth century* (vol. 1). Oxford: Pergamon Press. (Reads like a telephone book, but has very good bibliographic references for each crisis.)

- Lebow, R. N. (1981). *Between peace and war: The nature of international crisis*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.

The following mega-site has links to lots of materials from and about the Cuban Missile Crisis: <http://www.mtholyoke.edu/acad/intrel/cuba.htm>

2. Analysis of the psychological aspects of recent terrorism – international or domestic.

There are many examples, including Timothy McVeigh (convicted of blowing up the federal building in Oklahoma City), Theodore Kuczynski (UM's most famous math Ph.D. and the self-confessed Unabomber), and the many and varied militia movements. In addition, there is the fictional *Turner diaries*, a book that seems to have attained cult status among many domestic groups. Websites of some "terrorist" organizations are given in this webpage:

<http://RVL.4.ecn.purdue.edu/~cromwell/lt/terror.htm>

The following references on terrorism may be useful:

- Crenshaw, M. (Ed.). (1983). *Terrorism, legitimacy, and power: the consequences of political violence*. Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press
- Crenshaw, M. (Ed.). (1995). *Terrorism in context*. University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press.
- Reich, W. (Ed.). (1990). *The origins of terrorism: Psychologies, ideologies, theologies, states of mind*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Morgan, R. (1989). *The demon lover: On the sexuality of terrorism*. New York, NY: Norton.

3. An interview-based study of generational differences in political-psychological socialization and understanding of politics.

The idea of "political generation" is emerging as an important concept in recent theory and research on political socialization. As will be discussed in class on November 9, this concept suggests that the events that occur during one's adolescence and young adulthood (roughly from ages 15-23) often play an important part in shaping adult political life. Memories of these events may form a lasting "lens" through which people perceives later events, and an enduring framework for organizing their political and social beliefs.

Can you observe these effects in talking with people who should be from different "political generations?" Select and interview two people, one each from any two of the following five different "generations:"

Year of birth	Approximate years of entering adulthood	Likely shaping events
1910-1928	1930-1938	Great Depression
1919-1925	1939-1945	World War II
1926-1939	1946-1959	Post-war prosperity and the Cold War
1940-1952	1960-1972	JFK era and the late Sixties, including Vietnam
1961-1970	1981-1990	Reagan-Bush prosperity and national assertion
1971-	1991-	Gulf War, Clinton presidency, economic uncertainty followed by sustained economic boom

First, ask your interviewees about what they feel has been the most important public event that has occurred during their lifetime — what it is, how they understood at the time, how they understand it now, and what “lesson(s)” they feel this event has for understanding later events. A good way to ask begin this line of questions might be as follows:

“Tell me about the things that have been important for your own life. For example, what national event or series of related events has the greatest effect on your life — making you the kind of person you are, with the needs, beliefs, and values that you have? There are no right or wrong answers — pick whatever you feel was the most important event or events.”

Do people of different ages give different answers? Did the events mentioned by your interviewees occur during the hypothesized “critical” stage of their lives (roughly between ages 15-23)?

Then ask your interviewees about their views on some of the following specific political issues and events: (Be sure to ask both interviewees about the same issues so you can compare their responses.)

1. Women’s rights and gender-related issues (equal employment, equal pay, and equal political power; abortion)
2. Sexual orientation and gay rights
3. Race relations and affirmative action programs
4. The role of U.S. military force in today’s post-Cold War world (e.g., the bombing of Kosovo)
5. American economic health and trade competitiveness
6. Financing the government (taxes, and government expenditure)
7. Welfare reform
8. Health care
9. Crime
10. The Clinton-Lewinsky affair and Clinton impeachment

Among the people you interviewed, do you find any connection between “generation” (and the events that shaped it) and later political views? How do your results fit with what we have read and discussed about political generations?

In writing up the results of your interviews, place your interviewees into “generations” according to the table on the previous page. Indicate the events that they mentioned, and their views on specific political issues and events. Describe what connections you find, if any, between generation and political views. Evaluate the concept of “generation” based on your results.

The following general readings on the concern of “generation” are useful, in addition to the reading in the syllabus:

- Stewart, A. J., & Healy, J. M., Jr. (1989). Linking individual development and social change. *American Psychologist*, 44, 30-42.
- Strauss, W., & Howe, N. (1991). *Generations: The history of America's future 1584 to 2069*. New York: Morrow.
- Mannheim, K. (1928/1952). The problem of generations. In *Essays on the sociology of knowledge*. New York: Oxford University Press, pp. 22-24, 276-322 [the classic reference on “generation,” but tough reading].
- Kertzer, D. I. (1983). Generation as a sociological problem. In *Annual review of sociology*, vol. 9, pp. 125-149. Palo Alto, CA: Annual Reviews Press.

And the following reading is a particularly interesting analysis of “Gen X”:

- Ortner, S. B. (1998). Generation X: anthropology in a media-saturated world. *Cultural Anthropology*, 13, 414-440.