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1 Returning to the Social Logic of Political Behavior

In political science, the study of political choice and behavior—the focus of this collection of essays—has had a complex relationship with the social logic of politics. It is both obvious and well known that the immediate social circumstances of people's lives influence what they believe and do about politics. Even so, relatively few political scientists incorporate these principles into their analyses. The founders of the behavioral revolution in political science—Angus Campbell, Philip Converse, Warren Miller, and Donald Stokes, Anthony Downs, Heinz Eulau, V. O. Key, Robert Lane, and Sidney Verba—those intellectual visionaries who set the agenda for more than half a century of scholarship—understood and accepted these theoretical principles. Even so, they directed research away from them. Driven primarily by issues of data and survey methodology, Campbell, Converse, Miller, and Stokes changed direction, first in small steps and then in leaps and bounds. Explicit theoretical needs moved others like Key and Downs to blaze new paths. None, I will argue, offered compelling reasons for the change of course. Furthermore, recent advances in theory and methods support a return to the social logic of political behavior.

This chapter offers an intellectual history. I present the critical texts that helped to define the research orientation. Passages, statements, and long quotations stand as the data for this analysis. Here I set out the story of the social logic of politics in the behavioral revolution in political science, and I give reasons for political scientists and others who study political choice and behavior to return to this social logic.

The Social Logic of Politics in the Behavioral Revolution in Political Science

Returning to the foundational texts of the behavioral revolution in political science highlights the fundamental importance of the social logic of politics. I begin with a selection from *The American Voter* (Campbell, Converse, Miller, and Stokes 1960). This volume raised the flag of the Michigan school of electoral analysis, as it institutionalized the research agenda for electoral studies in the United States and other established democracies. It spawned as well the American National Election Surveys and parallel studies elsewhere. This research has provided the lion's share of evidence for the study of political behavior during the past fifty years.

Campbell, Converse, Miller, and Stokes recognized the power of immediate social circles on the ways that persons perceive and act in politics:

> Not only does the individual absorb from his primary groups the attitudes that guide his behavior; he often behaves politically as a self-conscious member of these groups, and his perception of their preferences can be of great importance for his own voting act. Our interviews suggest that the dynamics of these face-to-face associations

> are capable of generating forces that may negate the force of the individual's own evaluations of the elements of politics. Probably this happens most often in the relations of husband and wife . . . (p. 76)

> Knowledge of social processes may add much to our understanding of the fact that party allegiances not only remain stable but grow stronger over time. In addition to intra-psychic mechanisms that act in this direction, social communication in a congenial primary group may constitute a potent extra-psychic process leading to the same end. The ambiguity of the merits of political objects and events is such that people are dependent upon "social reality" to support and justify their political opinions. When primary groups engage in political discussions and are homogeneous in basic member viewpoints, the attitudes of the individual must be continually reinforced as he sees similar opinions echoed in the social group. (p. 293)

Here the founders of the Michigan school presented principles for the analysis of political behavior that were held by the other leaders of the behavioral revolution. Consider too the views of their colleagues, beginning with Robert Lane:

> Political participation for an individual increases with (a) the political consciousness and participation of his associates, (b) the frequency and harmony of his interpersonal contacts and group membership, and (c) the salience and unambiguity of his group references. (Lane 1959, 189)

> Groups orient a person in a political direction specifically by (a) redefining what is public and private in their lives, (b) providing new grounds for partisanship . . . (Ibid., 195)

Even V. O. Key, who was among the first to argue against the principles of the social logic of politics, accepted its importance. "Probably it is correct to picture the political system as one in which a complex network of [primary] group relations fixes and maintains opinions in some systematic relation to the larger components of the system, such as political parties" (1961, 69–70). Sidney Verba underlined the importance of small groups in the analysis of political processes as well as the behavior of individuals:

> If we are to understand the political process, greater consideration must be given to the role of face-to-face contacts. Primary groups of all sorts mediate political relationships at strategic points in the political process. They are the locus of most political decision-making, they are important transmission points in political communications, and they exercise a major influence on the political beliefs and attitudes of their members. (1961, 4)

> It is well known that the face-to-face groups to which an individual belongs exert a powerful influence over him; that he will accept the norms and standards of the group. . . . [This] is one of the best documented generalizations in the small group literature. (Ibid., 22–23)

And finally, note as well Heinz Eulau's general principles:

> Just as the significant environment of the individual is another individual, so the significant environment of the group is another group. (1962, 91–92)

> Political behavior is likely to vary with the type of groups in which the individual is involved. (1986, 38)

The behavioral revolution in political science began with the principles of the social logic of politics.

Every revolution draws on, negates, and transforms what precedes it. The transformation of political science is no exception to this rule. Political scientists drew on several sets of theoretical and empirical sources. Of direct and powerful relevance was a group of electoral sociologists at Columbia University, led by Paul Lazarsfeld and Bernard Berelson. Robert Merton and Edward Shils offered more general theoretical statements. At the same time, Campbell, Converse, Miller, and Stokes reinterpreted Karl Lewin's social psychology in order to reformulate the understanding of the relationship between the group and the individual. Political scientists accepted as well Leon Festinger's analysis of the relationship between the individual and the political reality portrayed by his or her peers. All of these sources accepted, applied, and developed the principles of the social logic of politics. And so the behavioral revolution in the study of political behavior transformed these intellectual sources.

Sources in Sociology

Paul Lazarsfeld and his colleagues at Columbia University, Bernard Berelson, Hazel Gaudet, and William McPhee, were the first to apply the social logic of politics to the study of electoral choice. *The People's Choice: How the Voter Makes Up His Mind in a Presidential Campaign* (Lazarsfeld, Berelson, and Gaudet 1968) and *Voting: A Study of Opinion Formation in a Presidential Campaign* (Berelson, Lazarsfeld, and McPhee 1954) introduced mass surveys into the analysis of political preferences. These studies interview respondents several times during an electoral campaign, offering the first panel surveys of electoral behavior. Several sets of questions ask respondents for information on the members of their immediate social circles, family, friends, work-mates, and neighbors. These colleagues examined evidence drawn from single communities, Elmira, New York, and Erie County, Pennsylvania, not a nationally representative sample of the electorate. These electoral sociologists initiated a research path, which Campbell, Converse, Miller, Stokes, Key, Eulau, and other political scientists followed and then redirected.

How important is the research of the electoral sociologists for the behavioral revolution in political science? Here are the opening words of *The American Voter:*

> In the contemporary world the activity of voting is rivaled only by the market as a means of reaching collective decisions from individual choices. . . . Indeed, anyone who reads the literature of voting research must be impressed by its proliferation in recent years. The report of one major study lists 209 hypotheses about voting in political elections, which recent work has tended to confirm. (1960, 3)

The volume's first footnote cites Berelson, Lazarsfeld, and McPhee's *Voting,* published in 1954, six years earlier. Similarly, the first sentence of Key and Munger's classic article cites *The People's Choice,* as they frame their presentation in opposition to Lazarsfeld and his colleagues: "The style set in the Erie County study of voting, *The People's Choice*, threatens to take the politics out of the study of electoral behavior**"** (Key and Munger 1959, 281). Heinz Eulau's first book also begins by echoing Key and Munger's point, citing the same passage from *The People's Choice* and declaring his opposition to social determinism (1962, 1). The leaders

of the behavioral revolution in political science first observed electoral choice through the lenses of electoral sociology.

As a result, they began with the principles of the social logic of political behavior. How did Lazarsfeld, Berelson, Gaudet, and McPhee enunciate those explanatory mechanisms? What were the leaders of the behavioral revolution in political science reading? And to what precisely did they react? Consider some critical themes in *The People's Choice:*

> While the individual preserves his security by sealing himself off from the propaganda which threatens his attitudes, he finds these attitudes reinforced in his contacts with other members of the group. Because of their common group membership, they will share similar attitudes and will exhibit similar selective tendencies. But this does not mean that all of the members of group will expose themselves to exactly the same bits of propaganda or that they will be influenced by precisely the same aspects of common experiences. (1968, xxxii)

The boldest version of this statement sounds like social determinism, and, as I will show below, it provides a point of attack for the political scientists:

> There is a familiar adage in American folklore to the effect that a person is only what he thinks he is, an adage which reflects the typically American notion of unlimited opportunity, the tendency toward self-betterment, etc. Now we find that the reverse of the adage is true: a person thinks, politically, as he is, socially. Social characteristics determine political preference. (1968, 27)

It is clear, however, that the last line only highlights the general stance; it is not a theoretical principle. The volume abounds in statements and evidence, which maintain that the effects of social context on political preferences vary. For example:

> People who work or play together *are likely to* vote for the same candidates. (Ibid., 137; emphasis added)

> The political homogeneity of social groups *is promoted by* personal relationships among the same kind of people. . . . In comparison with the formal media of communication, personal relationships are potentially *more influential* for two reasons: their coverage is greater and they have certain psychological advantages. (Ibid., 150; emphases added)

The study demonstrates how personal contacts affect the electoral choices of undecided citizens. Several factors drive the process: the power of the two-step flow of communications, in which information flows through opinion leaders; personal contacts need have no particular purpose; flexibility when encountering resistance; rewards of compliance; greater level of trust in the source, and persuasion without conviction (Ibid.,150–57):

> In short, personal influence, with all its overtones of personal affection and loyalty, can bring to the polls votes that would otherwise not be cast or would be cast for the opposing party just as readily if some other friend had insisted. (Ibid., 157).

In a footnote in the book's last chapter, Lazarsfeld, Berelson, Gaudet, and McPhee sketched a research project that would examine variations in the political homogeneity of social groups:

> The statement that people vote in groups is not very satisfactory. People belong to a variety of groups and therefore further research is necessary on the question: with *which group* are they most likely to vote? (Ibid., 170)

The complexity of social ties affects the political cohesion of social groups.

Berelson, Lazarsfeld, and McPhee (1954) developed this perspective. They expected, and their research finds, high levels of political homogeneity in primary groups (1954, 88–118). During an election campaign, intention responds directly to a combination of cues and requests from members of discussion circles, families, friends, and co-workers (pp. 118–49).

> [B]y the very process of talking to one another, the vague dispositions which people have are crystallized, step by step, into specific attitudes, acts, or votes. (Ibid., 300)

In turn, they disagreed with those who view casting a ballot as a rational act:

> The upshot of this is that the usual analogy between the voting "decision" and the more or less carefully calculated decisions of consumers or businessmen or courts, incidentally, may be quite incorrect. . . . In short, it appears that a sense of fitness is a more striking feature of political preference than reason and calculation. (Ibid., 311)

Finally, they added that the logic of democracy works at the aggregate level, not the individual level:

> True, the individual casts his own personal ballot. But as we have tried to indicate throughout this volume, that is perhaps the most individualized action he takes in an election. His vote is formed in the midst of his fellows in a sort of group decision—if indeed, it may be called a decision at all—and the total information and knowledge possessed in the group's present and past generations can be made available for the group's choice. Here is where opinion-leading relationships, for example, play an active role.
>
> Second, and probably more important, the individual voter may not have a great deal of detailed information, but he usually has picked up the crucial *general* information as part of his social learning. (Ibid., 320–21; emphasis in original)

Working with Elihu Katz, Lazarsfeld presented a broader analysis of the process by which people form attitudes, preferences, and values. Consider the following propositions taken from Katz and Lazarsfeld's *Personal Influence* (1955):

> As far as "communications *within* the group" are concerned two major sets of findings current in small group research are of considerable relevance:
>
> (a) Ostensibly private opinions and attitudes are often generated and/or reinforced in small intimate groups of family, friends, co-workers. . . .
> (b) Families, friendships, work-groups and the like are interpersonal communications networks through which influences flow in patterned ways. (p. 8)
>
> The way in which people influence each other is not only affected by the primary groups within which they live; it is co-determined by the broad institutional setting of the American scene. (Ibid., 9)
>
> [I]nterpersonal relations "intervene" [in the process of mass communication] by inducing *resistance* to those influences that go counter to those ideas that individuals

> share with others they hold in esteem; and, on the other hand, we found that when individuals share norms which are in harmony with an outside influence or when they are willing to incorporate a proposed change to group norms, then interpersonal relations may act as *facilitators* of change. (Ibid., 81)

Lazarsfeld, Berelson, Gaudet, McPhee, and Katz articulated the principles of the social context of politics as testable hypotheses. They examined panel surveys of particular communities in order to test and demonstrate the power of this theoretical perspective.

These sociologists draw directly on Simmel's and Weber's social science. They echoed as well the sociological wisdom of their own era. As noted in the Preface to this volume, Robert Merton highlighted the centrality of primary groups as he developed the concepts of reference group theory. He maintained that the Elmira election studies confirm the theoretical, normative, and empirical claims of pluralist theory:

> [I]t is not "individuals," tacitly conceived as "sand heap [*sic!*] of disconnected particles of humanity," who are protected in their liberties by the associations which stand between them and the sovereign state, but "persons," diversely engaged in primary groups, such as the family, companionships, and local groups. That figment of the truly isolated individual, which was so powerfully conceived in . . . Hobbes' *Leviathan*, and which was since caught up in the assumptions of the liberal pluralists, is a fiction which present-day sociology has shown, beyond all reasonable doubt, to be both untrue and superfluous. . . .
>
> [E]ven the primary groups in which persons are in some measure involved do not have uniform effects upon the orientations of their members. . . . Moreover, when conflicting value-orientations obtain in the primary-groups, and the modal orientations of the larger social environment are pronounced, the mediating role of the primary group becomes lessened or even negligible, and the influence of the larger society becomes more binding. (1957, 334–35)

Again, we find the general principles: people depend on each other, and there is a complex relationship among individuals, primary groups, and the broader society.

This perspective extends beyond Merton, Lazarsfeld, and their colleagues at Columbia University. It appears in Edward Shils's classic essay on primary groups (1951, 69) and David Riesman's *The Lonely Crowd* (1961, 23). The founders of contemporary sociology refurbished and transmitted the principles that began with the ancients and were presented again by Tocqueville, Marx, Weber, Durkheim, Mosca, and Simmel. The sociologists offered their colleagues in political science a choice: follow us or blaze your own path.

Sources in Social Psychology and Organizational Theory

Social psychologists—especially Kurt Lewin and Leon Festinger—provided another source for ideas that guided the behavioral revolution in political science. The authors of *The American Voter* modeled their "funnel of causality" on Lewin's field theory. This analytical approach applies a large set of immediately relevant explanatory factors (Campbell, Converse, Miller, and Stokes 1960, 33). Key (1961, 62) and Verba (1961, 23) explained the tendency toward conformity in political preferences among members of primary groups by referring to Festinger's work on cognitive dissonance, and Campbell and his colleagues also drew on Festinger to raise questions about using respondents' reports to describe their immediate social

circles. As the political scientists analyzed political preferences, they again utilized the principles of the social logic of politics.

Lewin's social psychology argues for the utility of examining groups as collectives, defined by the interdependence of members:

> Conceiving of a group as a dynamic whole should include a definition of group which is based on interdependence of the members. . . . A group, on the other hand, need not consist of members which show great similarity. . . . Not similarity but a certain interdependence of members constitutes a group. . . .
>
> [E]ven a definition by "equality of goal or equality of an enemy is still a definition by similarity. The same holds for the definition of a group by the feeling of loyalty or of belongingness of their members. (1964, 146–47)

Abstract categories like social class, ethnicity, or religion, therefore, do not define social groups. Similarly, sharing identification with a political party does not define a group. Indeed, psychological attachment provides the weakest form on which to base a group. It applies because it might constitute "a certain kind of interdependence, because there might be interdependence established by the feeling" (Lewin 1964, 146–54, and see also Lewin 1948, 84ff.). Analyzing an individual, Lewin maintained, requires examining the person's "life-space," which is defined as anything that might affect the person. One segment includes the individual's perceptions; another examines members of a person's immediate social circle (see Lewin 1964, xii). Here, too, the immediate social circumstances of people's lives affect their perceptions, choices, and actions.

Leon Festinger offered a tripartite analysis of the individual and the social group. Opinions, preferences, and beliefs are a joint function of how "real" the matter is, the views held by the members of a person's group(s), and the person's own conception(s):

> Validity of opinion depends on what others around him say: "An opinion, a belief, an attitude is 'correct,' 'valid,' and 'proper' to the extent that it is anchored in a group of people with similar beliefs, opinions, and attitudes." (Schachter and Gazzaniga 1989, 119)

In turn, Festinger recognized a fundamental tension in the set of explanatory mechanisms. Persons are influenced by members of their groups, and they join groups whose views conform to their own:

> It is to some extent inherently circular since an appropriate reference group tends to be a group which does share a person's opinions and attitudes, and people do locomote *into* such groups and *out* of such groups which do not agree with them. (Ibid.,19)

Drawing on the results of his own and other studies, Festinger noted a strong tendency for members of groups to adopt similar views: "Belonging to the same group tends to produce changes in opinions and attitudes in the direction of establishing uniformity within the group." Furthermore, the amount of change toward uniformity is a function of how attractive belonging to the group is to its members (ibid., 161).

Festinger's most frequently cited contribution, the theory of cognitive dissonance, combines these ideas into three core principles:

1. There may exist dissonant or "nonfitting" relations among cognitive elements.
2. The existence of dissonance gives rise to pressures to reduce the dissonance and to avoid increases in dissonance.
3. Manifestations of the operation of these pressures include behavior changes, changes of cognition, and circumspect exposure to new information and opinions (Ibid., 225).

Any of these outcomes may appear at any time.

Like the electoral sociologists, Festinger and Levin articulated theoretical principles in line with the social logic of politics, and not surprisingly both also drew on Simmel's and Weber's social science. As the political scientists who led their discipline's revolution applied this scholarship to the study of political behavior, they reaffirmed these principles. As they carved their own intellectual path, they moved away from the social logic of politics.

Parallel developments in the study of political organizations echoed these theoretical principles. Writing at about the same time, Herbert Simon also emphasized the centrality of social context for understanding people's decisions. Consider a passage from the introduction to his classic *Administrative Behavior: A Study of Decision-Making Processes in Administrative Organization* (1965):

> Organization is important, first, because in our society, where men spend most of their waking adult lives in organizations, this environment provides much of the force that molds and develops personal qualities and habits. (p. xv)
>
> In the pages of this book, the term *organization* refers to the complex pattern of communications and other relations in a group of human beings. This pattern provides to each member of the group much of the information, assumptions, goals, and attitudes that enter into his decisions, and provides him also with a set of stable and comprehensible expectations as to what the other members of the group are doing and how they will react to what he says and does. The sociologist calls this pattern a "role system"; to most of us it is more familiarly known as "organization." (p. xvi)

In Simon's presentation, social context especially affects the initial decision, preference, or social action:

> Two principal sets of mechanisms may be distinguished: (1) those that cause behavior to persist in a particular direction once it has been turned in that direction, and (2) those that initiate behavior in a particular direction. The former are for the most part—though by no means entirely—internal. Their situs is in the human mind. . . . Behavior-initiating mechanisms, on the other hand, are largely external to the individual, although they usually imply his sensitivity to particular stimuli. Being external, they can be interpersonal—they can be invoked by someone other than the person they are intended to influence. (Ibid., 95)

In *Administrative Behavior* and *The American Voter,* immediate social circumstances are the source of a person's initial political preferences. In both works, social circles provide stability for political preferences. Simon's approach to the analysis of decisions emphasizes the context in which choices are made and the cognitive factors that limit people's ability to behave in ways consistent with rational choice theory.

The Turn Away from the Social Logic of Politics

Notwithstanding their initial theoretical stance, the founders of the behavioral analysis of political preferences and electoral choices institutionalized a research agenda that departed from the social logic of politics. They conducted surveys that examine individuals but ignore the members of their social circles, and they transformed social groups into objects of individual identification. In the analysis of electoral decisions, they focused on political attitudes, perceptions of the candidates, and policy preferences. In *The American Voter,* social contexts provide background factors. As the American National Election Surveys became the primary source of data on electoral behavior for political scientists, they framed research around party identification and the issues and perceptions of the candidates in particular elections. As this model traveled across oceans, it structured electoral research in other democracies. As Key and Anthony Downs introduced rational choice theory into this subject matter, they left behind the principles of the social logic of politics. As debates have raged between the Michigan school and proponents of rational choice theory, scholarly attention has focused on the individual level of analysis. The social logic of politics lost scholarly prominence.

Several factors help to explain this change in direction. One set derives from the joint decision to use national sample surveys as the exclusive source of empirical evidence for political behavior and to analyze the information with statistical techniques. Designed to explain the outcome of elections as much as they were to account for electoral decisions, the surveys emphasize factors that may vary systematically at the national level during election campaigns. Policy issues and perceptions of the candidates stand as the classic examples. Just as important, those who designed the first national surveys denied the reliability of respondents' reports about the political preferences and behavior of their social intimates. Furthermore, the available statistical techniques could apply only to respondents who are independent of each other, a principle violated when members of social circles are included in the same survey. As a result, these surveys ask almost no questions that might provide direct information on the social context of politics.[1]

Issues of theory offer another set of explanations for the turn away from the social logic of politics. The political scientists exaggerated the social determinism in the work of Lazarsfeld and his colleagues and then rejected the distorted image. They insisted that the electoral sociologists could neither explain electoral decisions nor the outcome of elections. Key and Downs denied what they saw as the approach's presentation of nonrational or even irrational voters. Key argued that this conceptualization does not mesh with the core assumptions of democratic theory, while Downs maintained that it violated the principles of rational choice theory. As a result, the political scientists moved to the analytical foreground the immediate determinants of vote choice: attitudes and calculations.

Once again, I will sustain these points with statements taken from the critical books and articles. Consider first arguments about the effects of using national sample surveys, the absence of direct responses by social intimates, and the assumptions of the statistical techniques applied to the data.

> The structure of small groups has been successfully investigated by sociometric techniques but sociometry is difficult, if not impossible, to apply to large systems

> like nations. The macro-study of individuals was greatly aided by the development of the sample survey technique. But those who make most use of it—sociologists and social psychologists—are more interested in the behavior of individuals as individuals than in the structure and functioning of those large systems in which the political scientist is interested. (Eulau 1962, 134–35)

> [D]ifficulties in securing pertinent data have obstructed research on politically salient dyadic interactions as the building blocks for a sociological (rather than a psychological) understanding of individual-on-individual political effects. (Eulau 1986, 516)

The assumptions of most statistical studies provide another reason for the shift away from the analysis of the immediate social context of politics. Here the point comes from a recent general criticism of research in social psychology:

> Dyadic relationships form the core element of our social lives. They also form the core unit of study by relationship researchers. Then why (to paraphrase Woody Allen) do so many analyses in this area focus on only one consenting adult at a time? The reason, we suspect, has to do with the rather austere authority figures of our early professional development: statistics professors who conveyed the cherished assumption of independent sampling. . . . How do we capture the psychology of interdependence with the statistics of independence?
>
> Unfortunately for the development of interpersonal relations theory, the patterns laid down by the imprinting period of graduate statistics classes tend to dominate the rest of one's professional life. Interdependence in one's data is typically viewed as a nuisance and so dyadic researchers have developed strategies to sweep interdependence under the rug. (Gonzalez and Griffin 2000, 181–82)

The data and methods moved analysis away from the principles of the social context of politics.

The shift derived as well from theoretical considerations. The Michigan school reformulated and the rationalists transformed the core explanatory principles for the analysis of political preferences. Together they moved the study of political behavior away from the social logic of politics.

Consider first the flow of the argument in *The American Voter.* The opening chapter justifies the move away from community studies to a survey of the national electorate:

> In one important respect the research in Erie County and Elmira is only a partial account of the behavior of the American voter. Each of these studies has examined voting behavior within a single community. (Campbell, Converse, Miller, and Stokes 1960, 15)

The volume then describes the National Opinion Research Center's first nationwide study of this sort, a survey of the 1944 presidential election:

> This study was prompted at least in part by the desire to extend beyond the bounds of a single community some of the generalizations suggested by the study of Erie County. (Ibid., 15–16)

Next it details the national surveys conducted for the elections of 1948 and 1952:

> The project represented a shift in emphasis from explanation in sociological terms to the exploration of political attitudes that orient the individual voter's behavior in an immediate sense. (Ibid., 16)

More fundamentally, *The American Voter* seeks to link the analysis of electoral choice to the outcome of particular elections:

> This approach differed sharply from earlier sociological explanations and was intended to remedy some of the weaker aspects of these explanations. For example, the distribution of social characteristics in a population varies but slowly over a period of time. Yet crucial fluctuations in the national vote occur from election to election. . . . The attitudinal approach directed more attention to political objects of orientation, such as the candidates and issues, which do shift in the short term. (Ibid., 17; and see p. 65, where the authors cite Key and Munger [1959] on this point)

Attitudinal variables stand close to the vote in the authors' "funnel of causality" (ibid., 24–32). They merit, therefore, analytical priority.

Campbell, Converse, Miller, and Stokes also maintained that it is not appropriate to use respondents' reports to characterize the political views and behavior of the members of their social circles:

> Important as primary group influence may be in forming or contradicting partisan attitude, an interview survey of widely separated individuals is not well suited to its study. The small group setting of attitude and behavior is one of great significance, but estimates in survey studies of its importance in voting have had to depend on what respondents tell about the partisan preferences of their family, work, and friendship groups. (Ibid., 76)

Echoing one of Festinger's principles (and ignoring others) and noting a point, which Converse would elaborate in a later work (Newcomb, Turner, and Converse 1964, 126), the authors feared that people would impute their own political views to the members of their immediate social circle. Hence, these data are tainted by problems of unreliability. Only questions relevant to the study of political socialization and descriptions of objective social characteristics escape this decision.

Campbell, Converse, Miller, and Stokes did not, however, break completely with the social logic of politics. Even as they denied the reliability of respondents' reports, they affirmed the theoretical importance of these perceptions:

> Yet this difficulty does not lessen our qualitative sense of the importance of the small group setting of partisan attitude and the partisan choice. And it does not obscure the finding from an analysis of errors of prediction that primary group associations may in the exceptional case introduce forces in the individual's psychological field that are of sufficient strength to produce behavior that contradicts his evaluations of political objects. (Ibid., 76–77)

Alas, they recognized, data problems inhibited their ability to follow their theoretical preferences.

The authors of *The American Voter* offered an ingenious—if fundamentally flawed—solution to the conflict between a theoretical need to include information on social contexts in the face of inadequate data. They altered the definition of the social group, conceptualizing it according to a person's perceptions, and they referred to Kurt Lewin for support.[2]

> [T]he distinctive behavior of group members was too obvious to leave unanalyzed. After a time the psychologist, Kurt Lewin, suggested a convincing resolution to the problem of the "group mind." "Groups are real," he said, "if they have real effects."

> Groups are real because they are *psychologically* real, and thereby affect the way in which we behave. . . . Groups have influence, then, because we tend to think of them as wholes, and come to respond positively or negatively to them in that form. . . . Groups can become reference points for the formation of attitudes and decisions about behavior; we speak of them as *positive* or *negative reference groups.* (Ibid., 296)

In their interpretation of Lewin's analysis, Campbell, Converse, Miller, and Stokes defined groups not by patterns of interdependence or interaction but by a shared perception of a reference object. Note how far they moved from Lewin's definition of groups presented above. Campbell and his colleagues shifted the definition of social group and altered its role in the analysis of political preferences.

This step justifies the conceptualization of party identification as a psychological identification (Ibid., 121) or attachment (Ibid., 122). Strength of partisanship refers not to actions as much as feelings of intensity with regard to the reference group. (See, for example, 122 for the initial formulation of the measure.) In this conceptualization, people vary as well in the extent to which they identify with particular groups.

> [T]he concept of group identification and psychological membership remains extremely valuable. Individuals, all of whom are nominal group members, vary in *degree* of membership, in a psychological sense. . . . (Ibid., 297)

> Let us think of the group as a psychological reality that exerts greater or lesser attractive force upon its members. (Ibid., 306)

And so, Campbell, Converse, Miller, and Stokes constructed a survey question to assess how close the respondent feels to members of a group in order to measure group identification. This leads to their guiding hypothesis on the relationship between social context and political preferences:

> *[T]he higher the identification of the individual with the group, the higher is the probability that he will think and behave in ways which distinguish members of the group from non-members.* (Ibid., 307; emphasis in original)

The conceptualization implies a set of related concepts and their measures. Cohesive groups have intensely loyal members (Ibid., 309), and the extent to which members "feel set apart" from others defines cohesiveness (Ibid., 310). "The political party may be treated, then, as a special case of a more general group-influence phenomenon" (Ibid., 331). *The American Voter* offers two measures of social context: objective indicators such as education and occupation, and subjective measures of identifications and feelings of strength or closeness. Except for questions about the respondent's parents, it offers no information on the voters' immediate social circles. Subjective perceptions of social and political objects and reference groups replace patterns of trust, interdependence, and interaction among members of primary groups.

V. O. Key and Anthony Downs offered a more dramatic break with the social logic of politics. Both derived political choices from reasoned calculations about political objects. Key set aside the importance of members of social circles on political preferences, and Downs suggested that they play only a limited role. Both took giant leaps of theory.

Consider first the development of Key's position. As I note above, Key and Munger began their article by criticizing *The People's Choice.* This volume, they feared,

> threatens to take the politics out of the study of electoral behavior. The theoretical heart of *The People's Choice* rests on the contention that "social characteristics determine political preference. . . ." [Even though Lazarsfeld qualifies the statement] [t]he focus of analysis . . . comes to rest broadly on the capacity of the "nonpolitical group" to induce conformity to its political standards by the individual voter. . . .
>
> The study of electoral behavior then becomes only a special case of the more general problem of group inducement of individual behavior in accord with group norms. As such it does not invariably throw much light on the broad nature of the electoral decision in the sense of decisions by the electorate as a whole. (1959, 281–82)

> A major burden of the argument has been that the isolation of the electorate from the total governing process and its subjection to microscopic analysis tends to make electoral study a nonpolitical endeavor. . . . Hence, all studies of so-called "political behavior" do not add impressively to our comprehension of the awesome process by which the community or nation makes decisions at the ballot box. (Ibid., 297)

V. O. Key's final work, *The Responsible Electorate* (1966, 7–8), extends the criticism beyond the research of Lazarsfeld and his colleagues to include *The American Voter* as well. Even as Key accepted the findings of Lazarsfeld's research (see above, as well as numerous generalizations in the work with Munger [1959] and in *Public Opinion and American Democracy* [1961]), he rejected the conceptual and theoretical implications for the understanding of the democratic citizen.

In *An Economic Theory of Democracy* (1957), Anthony Downs reinforced this break with the social logic of politics. Offering a perspective that defines rationality solely in political or economic terms, he maintained that members of intimate social circles provide no more than time-saving sources of information to calculating citizens. The effects of the immediate social contexts on people's preferences are well known, he conceded, but they stand in the way of a rational-choice analysis of political behavior.

Downs (1957) began his analysis by insisting that not every decision may be defined as rational. He examined, therefore, only the economic and political goals of persons and groups:

> Admittedly, separation of these goals from the many others which men pursue is quite arbitrary. . . . Nevertheless, this study is a study of economic and political rationality, not of psychology. . . .
>
> Our approach to elections illustrates how this narrow definition of rationality works. The political function of elections in a democracy, we assume, is to select a government. Therefore rational behavior in connection with elections is behavior oriented toward this end and no other. Let us assume a certain man prefers Party A for political reasons, but his wife has a tantrum whenever he fails to vote for Party B. It is perfectly rational *personally* for this man to vote for Party B if preventing his wife's tantrums is more important to him than having A win instead of B. Nevertheless, in our model such behavior is considered irrational because it employs a political device for a nonpolitical purpose.
>
> Thus we do not take into consideration the whole personality of each individual when we discuss what behavior is rational for him. . . . Rather we borrow from traditional economic theory the idea of the rational consumer. . . . [O]ur *homo politicus* is the "average man" in the electorate, the "rational citizen" of our model democracy. (p. 7; emphasis in original)

> Undoubtedly, the fact that our model world is inhabited by such artificial men limits the comparability of behavior to behavior in the real world. In the latter, some men *do* cast votes to please their wives—and vice versa—rather than to express their political preferences. And such behavior is highly rational in terms of the domestic situations in which it occurs. Empirical studies are almost unanimous in their conclusion that adjustment in primary groups is far more crucial to nearly every individual than more remote considerations of economic or political welfare. [Here, Downs cites Katz and Lazarsfeld 1955.]
>
> Nevertheless, we must assume that men orient their behavior chiefly toward the latter in our world; otherwise all analysis of either economics or politics turns into a mere adjunct of primary-group sociology. (Ibid., 8)

Downs offered a theoretical postulate in order to reject the well-founded observation that husbands and wives influence each other's political preferences. Claims for theoretical pay-off justify this move, although he also offers an empirical observation (Ibid., 8).

Note as well that Downs—like Key and Campbell, Converse, Miller, and Stokes—retained a place for the principles of the social logic of politics. Toward the end of the book, he addressed the issue of the relationship between rational citizens and the costs of information. As citizens economize on time, they delegate the accumulation of information to others. Indeed, he maintained, people obtain information from others who share their views, again citing the work of Katz and Lazarsfeld and Lazarsfeld, Berelson and Gaudet (Ibid., 228–29).

Even as the behavioral revolution in political science began by demonstrating the power of the primary group to explain political choices and action, it set off in another direction. Even though the Michigan school took incremental steps and Key and Downs took leaps of theory, the final result is the same. Subsequent research has moved along a path that pays little attention to dyadic relations, other intimate social circles, or workplaces and neighborhoods. Isolated respondents aggregated into nationally representative sample surveys provide the locus of study. Attitudes about candidates, policies, and issues proximate to the vote obtain theoretical primacy. Calculations about asocial self-interest predominate. The explanatory principles of the social logic of politics recede into the analytical distance.

THE RETURN (AGAIN) TO THE SOCIAL LOGIC OF POLITICS

And yet the chapters in this volume demonstrate that the social logic of politics has not disappeared; indeed it continues to offer powerful theoretical principles for the analysis of political behavior. The essays offer analyses of turnout, partisanship, policy preferences, voter choice, and political discussions and participation. Several expand the frames of reference by examining multiple levels of analysis and by presenting political events and structures as part of explanatory schema. Several focus on the bases of political agreement among members of immediate social circles. They address the problems of data and methods by examining new sources of evidence and new analytical techniques. They reformulate and sharpen core theoretical issues and principles. These essays build on earlier studies of the social logic of politics as they strive to advance this research agenda.

Consider first the treatment of political preferences and behavior. Huckfeldt, Johnson, and Sprague (Chapter 2) examine voter choice, as do Levine (Chapter 8),

Johnston and Pattie (Chapter 10), and Fowler (Chapter 14). The analysis of partisanship appears in the chapters authored by Stoker and Jennings (Chapter 3), Kohler (Chapter 6), and Huckfeldt, Johnson, and Sprague (Chapter 2), as well as Zuckerman, Fitzgerald, and Dasović (Chapter 4). Verba, Schlozman, and Burns (Chapter 5) along with Kotler-Berkowitz (Chapter 7) and Lin (Chapter 9) study political participation. Even as some of the essays take political discussion as an explanatory variable, Gimpel and Lay (Chapter 11) and Anderson and Paskeviciute (Chapter 12) frame this mode of political activity as a dependent variable. In turn, Stoker and Jennings (Chapter 3) and Gimpel and Lay (Chapter 11) examine policy preferences and psychological stances toward political action as well. These chapters jointly apply the social logic of politics to the classic questions in the study of political behavior.

Several of the essays bring new data and analytical techniques to address the bases for agreement among sets of persons. Stoker and Jennings (Chapter 3) focus attention on variations in the level of political similarity between husbands and wives, as I do in my essay with Fitzgerald and Dasović (Chapter 4). Both chapters look at associative mating—Homer's and Aristotle's "like to like." The chapters by Huckfeldt, Johnson, and Sprague (Chapter 2), Levine (Chapter 8), and Fowler (Chapter 14) examine agreement among discussion partners and members of social networks. All three underline the recurrent presence of diverse political preferences among members of social networks. These chapters explore the extent to which sets of persons display political agreement.

In addition, Verba, Schlozman, and Burns (Chapter 5) maintain that exogenous political events and structures—such as the American Civil Rights movement in the 1960s—have powerful explanatory impacts on political participation. This theme returns in the chapters by Gimpel and Lay (Chapter 11, neighborhood and county political climate), Johnston and Pattie (Chapter 10, party activity during campaigns), and Anderson and Paskeviciute (Chapter 12, the aggregate distribution of political preferences at the national level). These essays move beyond the traditional questions and answers that frame analyses of political choice.

Several chapters show as well that classic "Michigan" surveys may be used to study the role of immediate social circles on political choice and behavior. First and most obvious, Huckfeldt, Johnson, and Sprague (Chapter 2), Levine (Chapter 8), and Anderson and Paskeviciute (Chapter 12) use questions on political discussants that appear in surveys intimately linked to the American National Election Surveys: the 2000 American National Election Surveys, the 1992 Cross-National Election Survey, and the World Values Survey (1993–95). Notwithstanding the worries of Campbell, Converse, Miller, Stokes, and Eulau, surveys may be designed to account for the results of national elections and to gather information on families, friends, and discussion partners. Similarly, Chapter 3 by Stoker and Jennings draws on Jennings's well-developed research on political socialization (see, for example, Jennings and Niemi 1974, 1981), which flows from the Michigan research tradition. So does the Civic Participation Study, which provides the data for Verba, Schlozman, and Burns's chapter as well as their recent studies of political participation (Verba, Schlozman, and Brady 1995; Burns, Schlozman and Verba 2001). Johnston and Pattie (Chapter 10) apply information on neighborhoods taken from the British Election Study of 1997, no matter that these surveys originated in collaborative work led by Donald Stokes (Butler and

Stokes 1969, 1974).[3] There are no fundamental difficulties in examining data taken from mainstream studies of partisan choice and political participation in order to explore hypotheses drawn from the social logic of politics.

The scholarship presented here benefits as well from new sources of data. My chapter with Fitzgerald and Dasović (on Britain and Germany) and Kohler's analysis (Germany) examine surveys (the British Household Panel Survey and the German Socioeconomic Panel Study) that cover many years and interview all persons in a household over the age of fifteen.[4] Designed by labor and health economists and demographers, they offer insights into the place of politics in the daily lives of Britons and Germans. Kotler-Berkowitz (Chapter 7) explores the Social Capital Benchmark Study (2000). Gimpel and Lay (Chapter 11) gather their own data on high schools and counties in the regions around Baltimore and Washington, D.C. Drawing on her extensive interviews with Arab immigrants in the Detroit metropolitan area, Lin (Chapter 9) demonstrates the utility of qualitative methodologies applied to the social logic of politics. Fowler (Chapter 14) too examines locally circumscribed areas, as he uses Huckfeldt and Sprague's studies of the St. Louis and South Bend areas.

The data permit multiple levels of analysis. Stoker and Jennings (Chapter 3) relate individuals to their households and then to the aggregate distribution of political preferences across the United States. Fitzgerald, Dasović, and I (Chapter 4) and Kohler (Chapter 6) contrast individuals, their household partners, and their more general social class and religious circumstances. Levine (Chapter 8) and Kotler-Berkowitz (Chapter 7) show that no matter a person's own characteristics, friendship ties affect vote choice and political participation. Johnston and Pattie (Chapter 10) offer a parallel argument as they demonstrate that neighborhood characteristics influence voting decisions in Britain, apart from the social characteristics of the respondents. Similarly, Gimpel and Lay (Chapter 11) study how the political characteristics of communities affect the acquisition of norms encouraging political participation. In two related essays, Huckfeldt and Johnson (Chapter 13, and joined in Chapter 2 with Sprague) show the autoregressive nature of discussant effects: the ability of discussion partners to influence each other depends on the preferences of others in the relevant social networks. Anderson and Paskeviciute (Chapter 12) link individual propensities to talk about politics to the aggregate distribution of political views at the national level of fifteen democracies. Finally, Fowler (Chapter 14) shows how decisions to cast a ballot influence others in a person's social network, finding a "turnout cascade." These essays approach the study of political behavior from several levels of analysis.

New statistical techniques enable researchers to address these complex data sets—the respondent, the immediate social circle, work-mates, neighbors, and more distant social and political structures (see especially Gonzalez and Griffin 2000). Interdependence among respondents no longer stands in the way of solid scholarship. The chapters employ diverse techniques, not only the relatively familiar Ordinary Least Squares regression, logit, or ordered logit models. Stoker and Jennings (Chapter 3) apply structural equation models to the problem of distinguishing the mutual effects of household partners; Levine (Chapter 8) parses the difference by offering instrumental variables as well as alternative models; and Fitzgerald, Dasović, and I (Chapter 4) lag the impact of one partner on the other. Kohler (Chapter 6) uses a fixed-effects panel logit model to study change in

partisanship. Gimpel and Lay (Chapter 11) use hierarchical linear models to study the relationship between adolescents and their towns and cities, and these same models appear again. Anderson and Paskeviciute (Chapter 12) study the combined impact of personal and national-level phenomena to explain cross-national variations in political discussions. In turn, Johnson and Huckfeldt (Chapter 13) offer agent-based modeling to explore the relationship between discussants and opinion change, one of the cardinal principles of the social logic. Finally, Fowler (Chapter 14) applies formal mathematical models to explore how each person's decision to cast a ballot influences those in the immediate social circle.

Put simply, researchers need no longer choose between evidence on discussion networks and evidence that applies to the national level of politics. They need no longer choose between Elmira and America (or Wivenhoe and Britain, or Freiburg and Germany)! Scholars of political behavior are no longer limited by statistical techniques that force them to assume that persons are atoms, with no necessary ties to each other. Gone are the impediments that turned Campbell, Converse, Miller, Stokes, Verba, and Eulau away from the social logic of politics.

Similarly, the contributors to this volume are not constrained by the theoretical concerns that induced Key and Downs to carve a new theoretical path. Huckfeldt's essays with Johnson and Sprague (Chapters 2 and 13) show the benefits of merging this perspective with Downs's recognition that individuals learn from each other. Fowler (Chapter 14) too retains the core principles of rational choice theory as he explores the impact of social interactions on turnout and vote choice. These essays as well as Levine's Chapter 8 speak directly to questions of democratic deliberation. Indeed, as Stoker and Jennings (Chapter 3) and Fitzgerald, Dasović, and I (Chapter 4) study political agreement between husbands and wives, we too look at the flow of influence between persons. The social logic of politics does not stand in contradiction with the claims about reasoning voters or citizens. It implies no social determinism.

Like the founders of the behavioral revolution in politics, many of the chapter authors recognize that the social logic of politics draws on an established body of scholarship (though we were all surprised to see some of its principles in a footnote in Aristotle!). References to Lazarsfeld, Berelson, Gaudet, and McPhee abound in the volume. As sociologists extend this tradition beyond electoral decisions (see, for example, Burt 1992, Granovetter 1973, and Knoke 1990), their research helps to frame many of the studies in this volume. Fowler (Chapter 14), Huckfeldt, Johnson, and Sprague (Chapter 2), Johnson and Huckfeldt (Chapter 13), Kotler-Berkowitz (Chapter 7), Levine (Chapter 8), and Lin (Chapter 9) draw directly on this literature's distinction between strong and weak ties. The theme of network density appears too. In turn, several of the chapters explore the hypotheses that sets of interacting persons will come to share the same political views. While Huckfeldt, Johnson, and Sprague (Chapters 2 and 13) do so directly, Stoker and Jennings (Chapter 3), Fitzgerald, Dasović, and I (Chapter 4), Verba, Schlozman, and Burns (Chapter 5), Kotler-Berkowitz (Chapter 7), Kohler (Chapter 6), and Lin (Chapter 9) also apply and examine this principle. Scholarship from sociology continues to underpin analyses that draw on the social logic of politics.

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, the chapters in this volume use this perspective to demonstrate what would not be known with another approach to the analysis of political behavior. Each chapter presents at least one finding that denies,

clarifies, refines, or extends accepted understandings. Huckfeldt, Johnson, and Sprague (Chapter 2) show that discussion networks affect electoral choices among persons who identify with a political party, and they also link the impact of one discussion partner on the distribution of preferences in the social network. Stoker and Jennings (Chapter 3) indicate that political agreement within marital households is a primary source of the narrowing of the gender gap in American politics. Fitzgerald, Dasović, and I (Chapter 4) point to the direct impact of household partners on each other's partisanship, no matter their level of political interest and other social characteristics. Verba, Schlozman, and Burns (Chapter 5) show that political discussions in households affect the future level of political participation by persons raised there, even after controlling for personal level of education. Kohler shows that interactions between personal political interest and the preferences of discussion partners activate the association between social class and partisanship. Friendship diversity, argues Kotler-Berkowitz (Chapter 7), affects political participation, even after controlling for the long-established importance of level of education. Similarly, Levine shows (Chapter 8) the importance of discussant effects on electoral choice, after controlling for a host of personal political characteristics, and Johnston and Pattie (Chapter 10) present these findings for the effects of neighborhoods. In Lin's essay (Chapter 9), various forms of political participation and perceptions flow from different kinds of social ties. In different ways, Gimpel and Lay (Chapter 11) and Anderson and Paskeviciute (Chapter 12) link variations in the rate of political discussion to the political context, not only individual-level factors. The volume's final essays are the most ambitious, as each addresses a long-standing theoretical puzzle. Johnson and Huckfeldt (Chapter 13) deny claims made by Axelrod and others by showing that the autoregressive natures of discussant effects ensures that sets of persons who interact with each other need never reach unanimous political views. Fowler (Chapter 14) shows that turnout cascades offer a creative solution to the problem of electoral turnout in rational choice theory. Applying the social logic of politics does more than reframe analysis; it advances knowledge of political behavior.

As these chapters move research forward, they also return to the classic themes of the social logic of politics. Stoker and Jennings (Chapter 3), and Fitzgerald, Dasović, and I (Chapter 4) give reason to doubt the venerable principles of associative mating ("like to like"), at least with regard to political preferences. At the same time, the essays show that the longer couples stay together, the more likely they are to hold the same political preferences. And while the chapters note the enormous impact of spouses on each other when compared with other social ties, they also demonstrate that husbands and wives do not share precisely the same politics. Even in this most intimate social relationship, political agreement is a variable. Friends matter too. Indeed, Kotler-Berkowitz (Chapter 7), Levine (Chapter 8), and Lin (Chapter 9) offer complementary demonstrations of the importance of weak and diverse friendship ties for political choices and participation. Here, close ties seem not to matter much at all. Neighbors also matter, as Johnston and Pattie (Chapter 10), Gimpel and Lay (Chapter 11), and Fowler (Chapter 14) demonstrate. And so we return (once again) to the concerns of Homer, Aristotle, and the Bible.