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The Lexicon of Political Psychology: Implications for Intelligence Analysis and Security Policy

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Abstract. This article describes some complexities of dispositional terms and the consequences for social psychological inferences informing intelligence analysis and security policy.

Both intelligence analysis and security policy are ultimately effected by people. Moreover, analysis and policy directly or indirectly display inferences about their effectors, as well as about their targets--other people. These two statements suggest that the amount and kind of dispositional constructs possessed by analysts and policymakers are vital constituents of how the world of security is seen by them and, thus, how they judge themselves, other people, and engage in inevitable social psychological comparison processes between themselves and others while engaged in analysis and policy activities.

Beyond philosophical stances of idealism, realism, materialism, and isomorphic parallelism. Beyond the tenuous status of hypothetical constructs and the threat of reifying them. Beyond controversies about the situational dependence of dispositions. Beyond the tensions between modernism and postmodernism as to dispositions' denotative, connotative, and narrative fates. Beyond all the above lies a significant dilemma. Are dispositional constructs--accepted on their own terms--suitable as inducers of social inferences informing intelligence analysis and security policy?

At least two research orientations suggest otherwise. One involves extensive meta-analyses and reviews of personality-intellectual ability and vocational interest-intellectual ability correlations. This research orientation suggests that there is extensive overlap among the various constructs that have been developed to constitute personality, intelligence, and interest. (This overlap can also be inferred from a close reading of theories of personality, intelligence, and interests.) Yet analysts and policymakers--in security bureaucracies and in the lay world--seem to ignore, discount, or be unaware of this overlap in their use of such constructs.

A second research orientation involves the development and use of nonlinear models that may better "fit" empirical data than linear models. For example, clinical judgments of psychiatric patients--in many ways an analogous challenge to that of politically judging the denizens of the security world--seem to better afford a fit for nonlinear models based on within profile scatter on objective personality tests. Moreover, there are systematic personality data patterns suggesting nonlinearity that may lend themselves to meaningful psychological interpretation. Yet analysts and policymakers--within and outside of the security bureaucracies--seem to believe that they rely on linear models in their mental labors, if their self-report is to be believed.

The question remains: Why would seemingly nonadaptive dispositional constructs continue to be possessed and employed by all who analyze intelligence and develop policy? Three possible answers immediately come to mind. (1) Consonant with common varieties of evolutionary psychological theory, the dispositional constructs at Issue reflect a past adaptiveness and currently may be in a state of flux so that tomorrow's constructs will reflect today's adaptiveness. (2) The dispositional constructs at Issue seem to lead to success often enough based on variants of illusory correlation that may comprise erroneous linkages of cause and effect or the social construction of acceptable social efficacy. (3) The

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dispositional constructs at Issue are adaptive but appear nonadaptive to researchers imbued with faulty philosophies and methodologies of science and other modes of conceptual misanalysis.

One might be apt to conclude that the word on words informing analysis and policy has not yet been written. (See Ackerman, P.L., & Heggstad, E.D. (1997). Intelligence, personality, and interests: Evidence for overlapping traits. *Psychological Bulletin*, 121, 219-245; Burkitt, I. (1996). Social and personal constructs: A division left unresolved: Comment. *Theory and Psychology*, 6, 71-77; Ganzach, Y. (1995). Nonlinear models of clinical judgment: Meehl's data revisited. *Psychological Bulletin*, 118, 422-429; Jones, R.A. (1997). The presence of self in the person: Reflexive positioning and personal constructs psychology. *Journal for the Theory of Social Behavior*, 27, 453-471; Mahrer, A.R. (1995). A solution to an illusory problem: Clients construct their worlds versus there really is a reality. *Journal of Constructivist Psychology*, 8, 327-337; Mancuso, J.C. (1996). Constructionism, personal construct psychology, and narrative psychology. *Theory and Psychology*, 6, 47-70.) (Keywords: Dispositional Constructs, Hypothetical Constructs, Language, Social Constructivism, Typology.)