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## Psychodynamics and Politics: Psychic Reality and Mental Representation

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Abstract. This article explores some implications for political psychology of semantic differences concerning psychoanalytic jargon.

Fayek (2002) has asserted that contemporary psychoanalysis and Freudian psychoanalysis present divergent conceptions of psychic reality and mental representation. While the former conception appears to be virtually identical with perception of the external world, the latter relates to “indosomatic stimuli and not with the stimuli of the external world.” Still other conceptions might apply to intrapsychic representations of aspects of the external world when one is not directly applying one’s sensory apparatus towards these aspects or even such representations as they vary in distance on nomological nets from sensory, perceptual, social constructive, or other associative premises.

The relevance of the definitions and semantic groundings of psychic reality and mental representation for political psychology applications of psychoanalysis relates to the resultant intrapsychic groundings of political decisionmaking and behavior. Developing psychoanalysis-based inferences based on unwitting misapplications of psychoanalysis would not only lead to a misinformed political psychology but would detract from the putative value of psychoanalysis for political psychology and of psychoanalysis itself. Thus, the salient issue becomes not the correctness of Freudian versus contemporary approaches but how to validly apply psychoanalytic theory and associated empirical data. In fact, it might well be that a return to psychology’s philosophical roots would not be a retreat from psychological knowledge but an advance for exacting psychological methodology and analysis for the benefit of political psychology. (See Fayek, A. (2002)). *Psychic reality and mental representation: Contemporary misapplications of Freud’s concepts*. *Psychoanalytic Psychology*, 19, 475-500; Hermann, R.K., & Shannon, V.P. (2001). *Defending international norms: The role of obligation, maternal interest, and perception in decisionmaking*. *International Organization*, 55, 621-654; Jepson, J. (2001). *What kind of science for what kind of decision? The discourse on a Danish heroin maintenance experiment*. *Contemporary Drug Problems*, 28, 245-275; Redd, S.B. (2002). *The influence of advisors on foreign policy decisionmaking*. *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 46, 335-364.)(Keywords: Political Psychology, Psychoanalysis, Reality.)