L2929 Week 03: The Psychological Approach
Essential Readings Questions to Consider

Classes: Thursdays, 11:00 – 13:00, LT313

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Office Hours: Thursdays, 16:00 – 17:00, MC431

Essential Reading Key Questions:

1. Darley and Batson provide evidence that being in a hurry has a stronger effect on behaviour than do pre-existing beliefs or salient ideas. Do you find this to be a convincing case? Why?
    a) Are there any changes that have happened in the last fifty years that you think might make their findings more or less relevant now? If so, what are they?
    b) Do you think you think there are other important contextual factors or underlying beliefs that affect our responses to situations? If so, what are they?
    c) What do you think are the flaws, if any, in Darley and Batson's empirical approach?

2. Gidron and Hall argue that 'the level of social respect or esteem people believe is accorded them within the social order' is an important driver of (populist) vote choice. How important do you think this factor is, relative to others?
    a) What are the bases for objective and subjective social status? How closely related do you think they are to each other?
    b) Gidron and Hall also note that 'threats to a person's social status evoke feelings of hostility to outgroups.' How important do you think group identities are in political behaviour more generally? Which group identities do you think are (currently) salient?
    c) Gidron and Hall use cross-sectional data to assess the relationship between subjective social status and vote choice and are clear about the causal limitations of their analysis. Do you think there are any alternative causal interpretations of the relationship between the two? If so, what are they?

3. What other kinds of motivations do Hamlin and Jennings distinguish expressive motivations from? What are the defining features of expressive motivations?
    a) What are some examples of instrumental and expressive motivations pulling in different directions?
    b) What factors affect how instrumental or expressive behaviour is?
    c) What identity and moral bases for expressive motivations do Hamlin and Jennings identify?
    d) Hamlin and Jennings, and Gidron and Hall to a lesser extent, situate the factors that they focus on within a rational choice framework. Do you think that is appropriate or not, and why?

4. What are the (different) democratic ideals emphasised by the five groups identified by Oser and Hooghe? What do you think are the implications of these ideals for political participation?
   a) How convincing do you find the assumption that 'actors act upon the interiorised norms that they consider as most salient'? Why?
   b) Do you think that there are other kinds of political participation that people who emphasise social rights could be engaging in?
   c) How can we reconcile Oser and Hooghe's findings with those of Darley and Batson?

5. Do you think that the rational choice and psychological accounts of political behaviour are more, less, or equally applicable to elites or masses? Why?

Essential Readings Further Questions:

6. How can the rational choice and psychological approaches be reconciled with each other, if at all?

7. Gidron and Hall's work implies the importance of anger and alienation as drivers of political behaviour. Do you think these are good motivations to behave in particular ways? Why?

Essential Readings for Next Week:

- Maria Teresa Grasso, Stephen Farrall, Emily Gray, Colin Hay and Will Jennings (2019), 'Thatcher's Children, Blair's Babies, Political Socialization and Trickle-down Value Change: An Age, Period and Cohort Analysis', *British Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 49, No. 1, pp. 17-36. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0007123416000375.

- Oliver Heath (2018), 'Policy Alienation, Social Alienation and Working-Class Abstention in Britain, 1964–2010', *British Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 48, No. 4, pp. 1053-1073. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0007123416000272.

- Andrew McNeil and Charlotte Haberstroh (2022), 'Intergenerational social mobility and the Brexit vote: How social origins and destinations divide Britain', *European Journal of Political Research*, online. https://doi.org/10.1111/1475-6765.12526.

Note: the essential readings are all available via the L2929 page on Myplace.