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Politics and the Psychology of Power

Multi-level Dynamics in the (Im)Balances of Human Needs and Survival

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*T*heories and research agendas in social psychology are often inspired by major political changes. The desire for effective propaganda in World War II begat research on persuasion (Hovland, Janis, & Kelley, 1953). The near-victories of fascism in the twentieth century inspired research on obedience (Milgram, 1974) and authoritarianism (Adorno, Frenkel-Brunswik, Levinson, & Sanford, 1950). African-Americans' rejection of racial subordination prompted research on racism (Pettigrew, 1993). The ascendance of feminism invited research on sexism (Glick & Fiske, 1996). However, there appears to be little social-psychological research on other major, interlinked global political changes such as the end of near-global European-U.S. direct colonization, and the depolarization of the world from the "Great Powers" of the U.S.S.R. and the U.S. Yet decolonization and depolarization have features not addressed by prevalent theories of inequality and intergroup relations. The first simple one is that decolonization, devolution, and depolarization have *disrupted* and *reduced* intergroup dominance at the interstate and national levels. Theories that purport to explain only why people capitulate to authority (Adorno et al., 1950), or how they justify inequality (Jost, Banaji, & Nosek, 2004), or how group-hegemony is self-stabilizing (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999), are poorly equipped to address these phenomena (see Pratto, Stewart, & Bou Zeineddine, 2013).

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The second simple feature is that decolonization and devolution involve multiple collectives. Yet typically theories of intergroup relations focus on only two groups: dominants and subordinates (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999), ingroup and outgroup (Tajfel & Turner, 1986), and competitors (Campbell, 1965). Further, these theories have mostly been applied to relations within long-established nation-states. But decolonization and devolution specifically involve nations, important subgroups of "nations," and transnational groups whose members transcend other designated group boundaries, such as youth or fundamentalist Islamism—multi-leveled and intersecting group structures (Ahn, Bagrow, & Lehmann, 2010).

To illustrate how social psychology can be expanded by addressing these phenomena and contribute to understanding them, we first elaborate on the additional complexity of these politics. Next, we point out useful social psychological tools for addressing these complexities. We use Power Basis Theory and Structural Balance Theory in an ecological approach, addressing why political contexts are so large, why every person can be considered a political actor, and especially why it is necessary to analyze the cross-time and interactional dynamics of power struggles. Finally, we demonstrate and discuss the applicability and implications of such theorizing for the social psychology of complex politics, using multiple methods and diverse samples.

THE COMPLEXITY OF POLITICS

Politics consists of power struggles. And power struggles are complex on several dimensions. First, many different kinds of actors are involved: individuals, families, organizations, nations, transnational corporations, temporary coalitions, and long-standing allies. Further, relationships between the same sort of actors are influenced by relationships with and between actors at different levels, such as relations of nations vis-à-vis international organizations. Also, assuming actors at any level have agency, then each actor's actions may influence anyone else in the dynamic system (Lehmann, 2012).

Second, the inclusion/exclusion criteria for any "collective" can change, sometimes rapidly. The formation of coalitions, the dissolution of alliances and large multi-part groups such as empires, the formation and adoption of new identities such as "union member" or "world citizen," and proximity and affiliation changes in networks are ongoing in politics (Lehmann, 2012) as they are in all kinds of natural networks (Ahn et al., 2010). In other words, not only the organization of social relationships, but the *reconfiguring* and *disorganization* of social relationships are part and parcel of politics, and another reason to consider them a dynamic system (see Chapter 13, this volume).

A third source of complexity is that power can exist in different states: (1) that derived from one's social position, such as group membership (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999; Turner, 2005) or authority role (Raven, 1965); (b) power as the state of having high freedom of choice (Russell, 1938); (c) power *over* something or someone else, which may include domination, control, coercion,

expropriation, exploitation, abuse, or milder forms of social influence, owner-ship, and territoriality (Dahl, 1957; Jackman, 2001); (d) potential power (Lewin, 1951); and (e) empowerment or power *to do* (Pratto, Pearson, Lee, & Saguy, 2008). Considering what people can do with power reveals that there are dif-ferent kinds of power—reputation, capital, and credible threats being examples of three distinct kinds of power that empower people in different ways. Kinds of power (*means of empowerment*) are distinguishable from *methods of social influence* (coercion, affiliation; Raven, 1965).

Theoretical approaches that can handle complex global politics should include the notions that: (1) some groups are substantially more powerful than others, yet subordinated groups contest and sometimes fundamentally change structural power balances; (2) one or more components of a social system can drive change in the perceptions of and objective reality of the composition of collectives (see Chapter 12, this volume); (3) more than two groups often have simultaneous mutual influence, even in seemingly bilateral interactions; (4) power structures have multiple layers and cross-cutting power relationships; (5) power itself is a complex and differentiated set of interactional and situational properties and states; and (6) the ways people respond to the dynamics of power are diverse and often creative. Social psychology is well equipped to address these complexities for several reasons, although its potential to do so remains underdeveloped.

HOW SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY CAN ADDRESS THE COMPLEXITIES OF POWER

Many kinds of actors with mutual influence.   Given that social psych-ology has addressed dynamic power relations in studies of families, friendships, leadership in formal and informal groups, gangs, ethnic groups, and inter-national relations, it would seem capable of addressing power among many kinds of actors. Theories that include more than one of these types of actors remain rare, although social dominance theory addresses three main levels (individ-ual, arbitrary set group, and institutional/societal). However, social psychology does have a theory of relational power general enough to apply to relationships among all these kinds of actors.

Interdependence theory (Thibaut & Kelly, 1959) focuses on explaining *dynamic relational power between two parties*. Although it has mostly been applied to intimate relationships (see Rusbult & van Lange, 2003, for a review), it is more general, and it incorporates the parties' context and states as sources of potential changes in their relationship.

Interdependence theory assumes that every party has things it wants. To the extent that a party can get such things from another party, it is satisfied with the relationship. To the extent one party cannot get the things it desires from other places, then the other party has more power *in the relationship*. But this is not just specified as an objective description of relational power. Rather, interdependence theory postulates that the party's perceptions of its

other possibilities (i.e., *comparison alternatives*) influences its satisfaction in a given relationship and the level of commitment to it. Exposure to information, changes in desires, and changes in the set of alternatives provided or salient in the environment, may all change satisfaction levels, motivating recalibration actions. In other words, the match or mismatch between desires and potential empowerment afforded by the environment, including other actors, is an engine of continuity or disruption, resistance or cooperation, driving power and relationship dynamics.

Were we to expand interdependence theory's dynamic engine to include more than two actors, more than one affordance in the system, and/or more than one kind of desire, it could describe a dynamic, complex system. This would make it much more akin to its origin, Lewin's (1951) field theory. Lewin (1951) emphasized that power is a potential, not a particular role or behavior, that social perception and imagined possible futures are an integral part of how power is instantiated, and that multiple actors are involved and are considering potentials within a field or context. Hence, any description of power must include possible actual and imagined futures, the field, and multiple actors.

Continuous flux in the constitutions of collectives.   Dynamic relationships among multiple actors will produce ongoing change in the constitution of collectives. As parties take actions such as forming alliances or shunning others to fulfill one desire, the environment will change due to these group-constititutive actions as well as others' initiatives and reactions in that context. Group members, then, may continuously need to update their actions and collective self-definitions and images, even if their goals remain the same. This is because these collectives themselves are often a very important aspect of the perceived utility of the environment, not only for material goods but for social "goods" such as acceptance and status (Sherif & Sherif, 1966; Turner & Bourhis, 1996).

"Market" dynamics.   Markets, or how people get or get rid of things of value, are dynamic systems because the market price for anything of value derives from the interaction between different traders' utilities. However, although economic theories assume that anything one values is convertible to one subjective metric of "utility," social psychology has identified systematic errors in this assumption. Immediate and longer-term utilities are not the same (Chapman, 2005). The acuteness of one's needs, which varies, hampers one's freedom of choice in markets, and changes utilities. It is also hard for people to convert things to a common utility because things *feel* fundamentally different (chocolate is for pleasure, a concrete plan is for security), and because pitting some things of value against other things of value (e.g., lives for money) is often morally repugnant (Tetlock, Kristel, Elson, Green, & Lerner, 2000; also see Chapter 3, this volume). Further, the utility of a given thing (e.g., going to war, a coastline) to a collective may be different from the utility of that thing to an individual. And social psychology has demonstrated the complexity and difficulty people often face in balancing individual and group needs, affordances, and constraints (e.g., tragedy of the commons).

POWER BASIS THEORY

What people want and why they need power.   To understand "market" dynamics further, we need to understand what people value. Interdependence theory and field theory presume people have desires, but do not specify *what* they desire. Power Basis Theory points out that people have several particular survival needs. To fulfill each kind of need, people need the power to satisfy them, and this is why survival needs are the basis of power and the motivation to amass power. Extending field theory, Power Basis Theory states that the ability to meet survival needs is a *joint* function of properties of the person and the person's local ecology. If the dynamic, ecological system incorporating people's internal states and their context is working, then people are sensitive to what they need, are motivated to obtain it, and are able to satisfy those needs from their local ecology. When their needs are satisfied, their sensitivity and motivations adjust appropriately (Pratto, Lee, Tan, & Pitpitan, 2011).

Power Basis Theory defines constructive power as the ability to meet needs for oneself (or another). In this theory, power is not *comparative* or *relational* to others, but in relation to one's own (or others') needs. Having power means to be empowered to meet needs. Destructive power is the ability to prevent one's own or another's needs from being met; acting upon this potential disempowers, potentially to the point of harm or death. Power in Power Basis Theory, therefore, is not equivalent to control, social influence, domination, asymmetric interdependence, agency, authority, nor, given that people are largely bound by their survival needs, to absolute freedom.

Power Basis Theory posits that each basis of power meets, or threatens, a different basic need. For example, having legitimacy to be welcomed in a functioning community serves the need to belong (see Chapter 18, this volume). People need to have all their survival needs met directly. For example, a welcoming community may be able and willing to feed one, but it is not, in-and-of itself, edible. The particular needs specified imply dynamics for two reasons. First, Power Basis Theory posits that the reason there are recurrent conflicts in particular domains is that they are required to meet different basic survival needs (see Pratto & Walker, 2004). Second, having a kind of power that mismatches one's needs may still be useful because people often can use one kind of power to obtain another. Transactions that change the kind of power to another kind are what make power social. Third, individuals' momentary needs and desires can change transaction "prices," and one's transaction partner(s) can also change.

NOVEL CONTRIBUTIONS OF POWER BASIS THEORY

The power transactions that indicate how fungible different kinds of power are for one another have important implications both for individuals and for those in their ecologies. If such transactions do not require one to sacrifice one kind of power for another, then those with some power will tend to accumulate more

power. This process increases inequality unless curbs are put in place. Further, if an exchange transaction is necessary, and one's need is acute, one could lose what power one has to obtain an immediate necessity. This may also increase inequality, unless satisfying the need is compensatory—that is, enables some way to regain the exchanged power.

Power Basis Theory has several implications not emphasized by other theories: (1) the fluctuation of different kinds of power available to both individuals and collectives and their fungibility will result from the transactions and emergent psycho-cultural phenomena (e.g., social rules, norms, notions of justice and of morality, ideologies) in their social ecologies; (2) power struggles are not just a matter of dominance and counter-dominance striving, but are inherently tied to the struggle to meet one's survival needs; (3) people are more at risk for mortality and suffering the less power they have; and (4) unlike approaches to power that focus on leaders, elites, or dominant groups, Power Basis Theory considers everyone to be a political actor and every behavior to be a political act.

This last point requires clarification. According to the principles of the theory, to meet their survival needs, all must seek empowerment, and people can act in an almost infinite number of ways that influence empowerment, including in counter-productive, or as the theory terms it, mis-calibrated, ways. For these reasons, every agent is a political actor, and every act is (broadly) political. People not only can compete or cooperate, but can deprive, exploit, hoard, subjugate, negotiate, and innovate to access power. In doing so, they alter their physical and social ecologies, all within a grand commons that is equally vital to all for the ability to satisfy needs. Thus, the notion that any act by individuals or collectives is independent of systemic consequences for any polity is untenable. Whether any act is political is a foregone conclusion—how, why, how much, and for whom it is (most) political, are the more important and interesting questions.

We now describe some of our research illustrating these concepts.

HEALTH CORRESPONDS TO ENVIRONMENTAL AFFORDANCES FOR POWER

The fundamental tenets of Power Basis Theory are (1) constructive power is to meet survival needs; (2) empowerment is a joint function of an actor's capacity and the actor's ecology; (3) disempowerment threatens survival; and (4) although needs must be met with particular kinds of power, transactions can make kinds of power fungible with each other. Research we have conducted pertaining to HIV bears out these tenets. We chose to examine HIV because it is a serious threat to survival. In contrast to the many approaches that view HIV infection as due to individual behavior (e.g., "unsafe" sex), Power Basis Theory emphasizes that risks to well-being also stem from impoverished social ecologies and the fungibility they drive. Congruent with the postulate that power inheres in environment affordances, in a worldwide comparative study we found that *nation-level* indicators of knowledge (e.g., literacy rates),

legitimacy (e.g., rights), material resources (e.g., unemployment rate), and violence (e.g., homicide rate) each correspond strongly to HIV prevalence within nations (Tan, Earnshaw, Pratto, Kalichman, & Rosenthal, 2014). This finding illustrates that ecological deficits in nations disempower their residents, and that several kinds of power (e.g., violence, legitimacy) in the ecology influence individuals' well-being, a strong marker of likely length of survival. Rosenthal and Levy (2010) reviewed empirical evidence showing that the reasons women are particularly likely to acquire HIV in certain contexts is that they are especially disempowered in each of the kinds of power outlined by Power Basis Theory. Qualitative studies illustrate how being low in one kind of power (e.g., lack of material resources, low legitimacy of their social categories) can lead or coerce people into trading access to their sexuality, in emotionally and physically unhealthy ways, to gain access to other power, such as economic opportunities (Katherwera-Banda et al., 2005; Tan, Pratto, Operario, & Dworkin, 2013; Tan, Pratto, Paul, & Choi, 2013;). Such research connects "public politics" (e.g., allocation of social infrastructure resources, the identity politics of stigma) to personal empowerment and health.

EXPERIMENTAL EVIDENCE OF FUNGIBILITY

Power Basis Theory also argues that each action people take to meet survival needs can produce systemic changes in the super-ecological system, the global commons. Understanding the emergent outcomes of fungibility for communities is also critical to well-being and mortality. Even in wealthy, developed countries, greater inequality is associated with worse health outcomes, including mortality rates, for *everyone* (Wilkinson & Pickett, 2008). Such inequalities may be driven by fungibility. To causally test whether the exercise of power can produce fungibility and inequality, we invented an experimental game method called the *In Game*.

In the In Game, each player's goal is to stay in the game ("survive"), by maintaining a minimum amount of "resource power." To prevent participants from relying on overt social norms about power use, power is never labeled as such. Rather, different kinds of power are represented by different colored tokens and the rules about what one can do with them vis-à-vis the other players. Participants interact with other real participants over many transactions, and are required by the game to accomplish "life events," such as obtaining an obligation from another person or giving up resources. The game is not zero-sum nor competitive; we designed the game events so that all the players would retain enough resource tokens to remain in the game if they did nothing other than what they were required to do. However, their choices over how to use their power (tokens) could redistribute and increase or decrease the amount of power available.

In two games with different sets of events, we found that even with egalitarian starting conditions, equal needs, equal allocations of power tokens throughout the game, and the same rules for all players, players' collective actions

created inequality in power among the players. Further, the more inequality created in a game session, the more simulated mortality (people going out of the game because they had too few resource tokens) occurred, and the worse participants felt (Pratto et al., 2008). These experimental results simulate public health outcomes for wealthy nations, showing that people's behavior using power to survive can produce the inequality that hampers well-being.

However, Power Basis Theory posits that social norms, such as communitarianism, and policies, including progressive income tax, can change the behavior that produces emergent outcomes like inequality. We tested this idea in additional experiments using the In Game. The In Game allows us to test causality both by manipulating conditions for sessions or for players within a session, and by comparing actual outcomes to a simulated game without the optional uses of power deployed by players. In one variant of the game, we found that imposing risks on players who were pursuing personal commodities from other players curtailed the development of inequality and the rate of mortality in game sessions (Pratto & Pitpitan). In another variant, Stewart, Pitpitan, Lee, and Pratto (under revision) subtly set the game session norm to be either communal or agentic for an otherwise identical game set-up. The communal condition developed less inequality. These experimental norm manipulations provide causal behavioral evidence that people anticipate consequences of their actions given local norms, and that this behavior changes the ecology of their collective.

NEEDS AND THE POWER STRUGGLES BETWEEN DOMINANT AND SUBORDINATE GROUPS

If dominant groups curtail others' means of meeting survival needs, it is no wonder that subordinate groups would resist dominance; it may be a matter of their survival. In fact, around the world, members of subordinate groups disapprove of group dominance in general more than members of dominant groups do (Lee, Pratto, & Johnson, 2011).

Such differences between dominant and subordinate groups have implications for intergroup politics. Stereotypes of and behavioral tendencies toward other nations depend on how one perceives the structural relation with respect to their relative power, relative status, and goal compatibility, according to image theory (Herrmann & Fischerkeller, 1995). For nations with incompatible goals, three images are common. A nation perceived as weaker in power and lower in cultural status will be viewed as a *dependent*. Conversely, if the weaker nation also views the stronger nation as culturally superior, the *imperialist* image can motivate resistance to exploitation and sabotage. A weaker nation that views the other nation as culturally inferior will view it as *barbarian*, an image not usually associated with direct conflict. Due to the "barbarian's" greater power, passivity is typically seen as a wise course of action (Cottam, Dietz-Uhler, Mastors, & Preston, 2004). Alexander, Levin, and Henry (2005) surveyed Lebanese university students in late 2001 about their perceptions of the U.S. in relation to

Lebanon and found that most viewed the U.S. as barbarian. This image likely dampens the desire to fight U.S. dominance despite resentment of it; but both resistant and passive stances can be seen among Lebanese citizens and its political factions, as we detail below.

In today's world, U.S. interference in other nations is not often welcomed or respected (Early, 2006; Glick et al., 2006), but many Americans feel differently. For example, following the September 11, 2001 attacks on the U.S., the end of American dominance was a hope for Lebanese but a fear for American citizens (Pratto, Lemieux, Glasford, & Henry, 2003). Resistance should be considered a normal part of group dominance because dominance itself sows the psychological seeds of resistance: identification with subordinate groups, feelings of injustice, and rejection of hierarchy-legitimizing ideologies (see Pratto, Stewart, & Bou Zeineddine, 2013). Historical studies have described the advent of counter-dominant ideologies such as abolitionism, feminism, socialism, anti-colonialism, human rights, pan-Africanism, pan-Arabism, and liberation theology. These ideologies seem to have widespread influence; people around the world continue to adopt more egalitarian values and to reject group prejudice (Bou Zeineddine & Pratto, 2014). Rejecting dominant ideologies and developing alternative views is an important, creative, and often generative tool of resistance (Sweetman, Leach, Spears, Pratto, & Saab, 2013) and need-fulfillment.

As a case in point, throughout the twentieth century, Western academics, military leaders, politicians, and business leaders argued that Arabs were incompetent to govern themselves, and that outside control of Arabs was necessary to maintain world security (DeAtkine, 2009; Friedman, 2006; Huntington, 1993; Lewis, 2002; Patai, 1973; Parker & Opell, 2012). Such arguments made to U.S. presidents helped to shaped dominative policies toward many Arab nations (Jreisat, 2006; Little, 2002, pp. 118–155), policies resoundingly resented by Arabs (Pew Global Attitudes Project, 2011; Zogby & Zogby, 2010). However, surveys in 14 nations shortly after the beginning of the Arab uprisings in 2011 showed that many participants rejected these ideologies of Arabs as incompetent (Pratto, Saguy, et al., 2014). Rejecting these ideologies appears to legitimize support for an independent Palestinian state and for the popular Arab uprisings to succeed, and was especially the view of people low on social dominance orientation.

Moreover, dominating policies have given rise to counter-dominant political movements that have hampered the degree of U.S. control in the region (Lynch, 2012). Such movements partly appeal to Arabs for their counter-dominant stance (Early, 2006; El-Husseini, 2010). For example, in random samples of urban Syrians and Lebanese in March, 2010, the more participants opposed U.S. domination of Arabs, the stronger was their approval of Hezbollah (Pratto, Sidanius, Bou Zeineddine, Kteily, & Levin, 2013). Such resistance by subordinates introduces changes in the boundaries of collectives, identification with collectives, and in what kinds of power are available to and used by actors.

MULTIPLE LAYERS AND PLAYERS

Both resistance and domination mean that the relevant actors in an ecology are numerous and involve changing collectives in hierarchical and cross-cutting relationships. For Syrians and Lebanese for example, because of alliances or enmity between domestic political factions and their regional neighbors (notably Syria and Israel), and because of alliances or enmities between even more dominant political entities (the U.S. and Russia), there is no clear distinction between domestic and foreign politics. Thus, Syrian and Lebanese citizens' political attitudes toward "domestic" political factions, including their own government, is inherently related to their attitudes toward outside political entities such as the U.S. or Iran (Pratto, Sidanius et al., 2013).

To understand political attitudes as part of complex political dynamics, we can employ structural balance theory (Cartwright & Harary, 1956). Balance Theory states that triads of actors will tend towards "balanced" relationships, primarily mutual positivity or "friendship," followed by two-on-one "enmity." Any other configuration of a triad, such as mutual "enmity," or one actor a "friend" to two "enemies," will be unstable (Heider, 1946). Structural Balance Theory extends these simple rules about triads into large networks, with the implication that any change within an unstable triad may perturb directly connected triads, potentially changing relationships across the system (see Chapter 2, this volume). This conceptual tool can be used to understand the kind of direct and more distal power relationships among neighbors, regional factions, and global powers. Using recent research, we illustrate how Structural Balance Theory, coupled with power considerations, shows why some places can be expected to be unstable and conflictual.

Returning to the 2010 surveys of Pratto, Sidanius et al. (2013) of Lebanon and Syria, we consider a citizen's likely pattern of attitudes toward Hezbollah, his or her own national government, and the U.S. For a Syrian, the mutual enmity between the U.S. and the Syrian government implies that the citizen would find it difficult to generally like both. Therefore, citizens' attitudes toward these entities should correlate negatively. Given Syria's alliance with Hezbollah and that both entities oppose the U.S., we should also expect Syrian citizens who favor their government to favor Hezbollah and to dislike the U.S. In fact, at the time of our survey (a year before Syrians began their uprising against the Al-Asad regime), Syrian participants' attitudes correlated reliably in just this way (see top triad of Figure 15.1).

When the survey was conducted, the Lebanese government's divided but relatively Westward-leaning stance should have manifested as a somewhat positive correlation between attitudes toward the U.S. government and the Lebanese government. The opposition of the non-Hezbollah majority of the Lebanese government to Hezbollah should have led people who approve of one to disapprove of the other, producing two negative correlations. Likewise, the perceived enmity between the U.S. and Hezbollah should have made it unlikely a Lebanese could approve of both, resulting in another negative
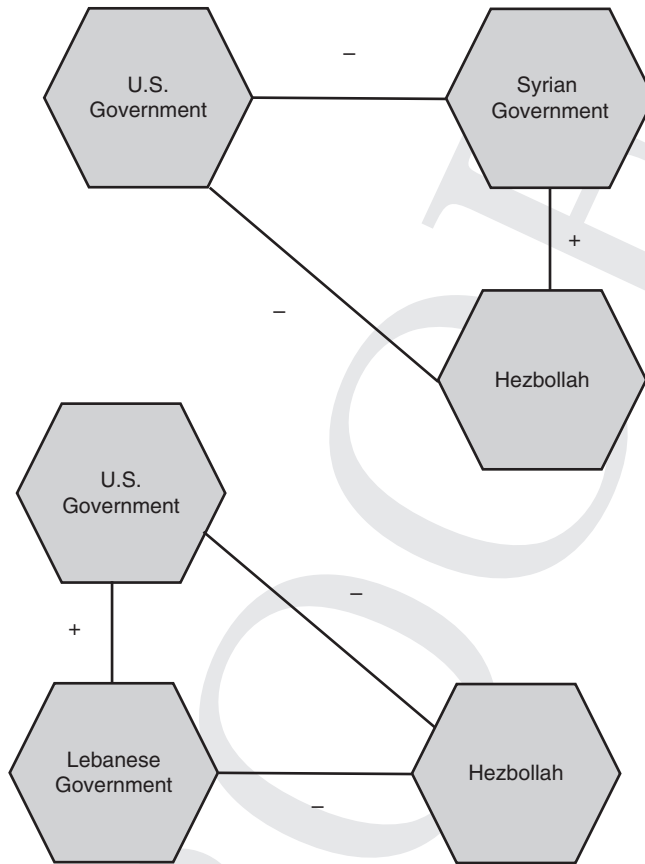
Figure 15.1   Direction of correlation of citizens' attitudes towards the U.S. government, participants' own national government, and Hezbollah in Syria (top triad) and Lebanon (bottom triad).

correlation. These patterns were also reliable, as depicted in the bottom triad of Figure 15.1. Thus, although alliances and attitudes are in flux, Lebanese and Syrians' attitudes followed Balance Theory's predictions (see also Eicher, Pratto, & Wilhelm, 2013, for a study of Palestinians', Israelis', Americans', and Swiss projections using Image Theory and Balance Theory).

Now let us now consider the configuration of these same four actors all together. If we take citizens' actual attitude correlations as representing the actual relationships among the entities, the only way that the two sets of attitudes can be made stable is if Lebanon and Syria have a fundamentally hostile relationship (shown in the top panel of Figure 15.2). And indeed, such has occurred, as in Syria's occupation of Lebanon, and the Lebanese expulsion of that occupation. Note, then, that one could attribute one source of difficulty in the relationship between these two border- and history-sharing neighbors as
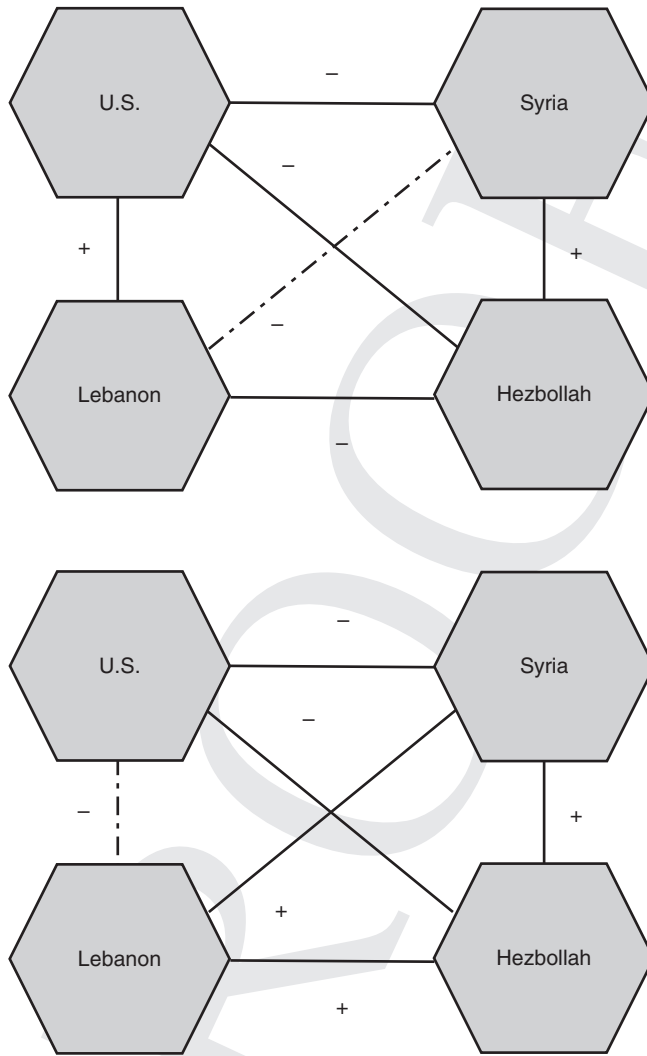
Figure 15.2   Potentially balanced configurations among U.S., Syria, Lebanon, and Hezbollah, with difficult relationships marked with dashed lines.

due to outsiders: to the colonial powers in the past and now the U.S. This is one example of how the larger geo-political context influences regional inter-national and inter-factional relationships. Nonetheless, it is difficult to have one's next-door neighbor as an enemy. The dashed line in the top panel of Figure 15.2 marks the problematic relationship in this configuration.

The other theoretically balanced relationship among this quartet is shown in the bottom panel of Figure 15.2. This configuration may be thought to occur when Hezbollah dominates the Lebanese government. Although this
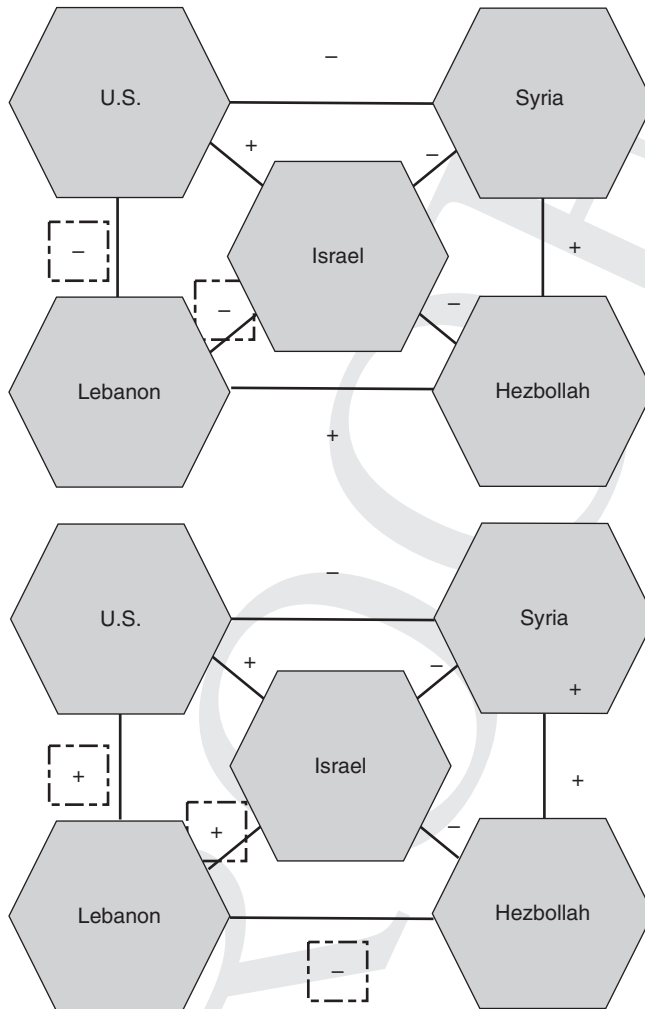
Figure 15.3   Potential relationships among Syria, Lebanon, Israel, Hezbollah, and the U.S., with problematic negative relationships, and the concomitant requisite positive relationships surrounded by dashed lines.

configuration solves the problem of enmity between Lebanon and Syria, it is predicated on an unfriendly Lebanon–U.S. relationship. Their violent history and their enormously imbalanced military and economic capacities and inter-dependencies make this implausible. Thus, neither "balanced" solution shown in Figure 15.2 is stable for Lebanon. Nonetheless, extensions of Structural Balance Theory predict that this (and the associated relations with Hezbollah) will be more stable than a détente with the U.S. in the long run, both because the "enemy of my enemy is my friend" configuration is in general less stable than

the "enemy of my friend is my enemy" (Crano & Cooper, 1973), and because of the relative indifference or lack of utility, at best, in the U.S.–Lebanese relationship. This is borne out in recent political developments, such that groups historically aligned with the West (Lebanese Maronites) have begun shifting their alliance to Hezbollah and Syria, or at least away from the U.S. and its proxies, as the U.S. government continues to withdraw its attention and resources from the region.

Were we to insert Israel into either configuration in Figure 15.2, as we show in Figure 15.3, we introduce more complexity, even assuming that Israel has stable relationships with every entity except Lebanon. All the small triads shown in the top panel of Figure 15.3 are balanced, but each consists of the "mutual enemy" relationship (- + -). Though balanced, empirical research shows that "mutual enemy" relationships are not as stable as "mutual friendship" relationships (+ + +; Szell, Lambiotte, & Thurner, 2010), as predicted by Cartwright and Harary (1956). Assuming that the implied large diagonals (beneath Israel) in the top panel of Figure 15.3 are positive between Lebanon and Syria, and negative between Hezbollah and the U.S., all the triads are balanced. This configuration shows that Lebanon cannot simultaneously be on friendly terms with both its bordering neighbors, Israel and Syria. It also means that Lebanese friendliness toward Syria implies enmity toward both the U.S. and Israel, and all three nations have invaded and attacked Lebanon from outside in recent years. Lebanon has no mutually good options vis-à-vis relations with these nations. Were positive relationships between Lebanon and the U.S. and Lebanon and Israel to be established, as shown in the bottom panel of Figure 15.3, Lebanon would have to be opposed to Hezbollah. This is untenable because Hezbollah is not only indigenous, but a successful political party, well-armed, and a provider of social services (Early, 2006). Furthermore, opposing Hezbollah would make Lebanon have poor relationships with Syria and Iran. Not getting along with its neighbors might improve Lebanon's relations with the U.S., but given regional interference and violence in Lebanon and the Arab world, that is also implausible. Thus, the three relationships marked with dashed lines in the bottom of Figure 15.3 are theoretically, but not plausibly, stable.

Because balance theory is supposed to describe intuitive psychology, it seems likely that relevant political actors perform similar calculi when they are considering power as possibility (Lewin, 1951). For instance, in the top diagram of Figure 15.3, if we changed the sign of the relationship between the U.S. and Israel to be negative, then the resulting perturbations would mean that everybody is negative toward Israel, and everybody else is positive toward everyone else. This may be the kind of isolation that Israelis fear and may contribute to their sense of existential threat, despite the many demonstrable facts that their survival needs are, and have been, met much more than their neighbors'. We have inserted Israel into Figure 15.3 because of its history of violence with its neighbors, but conceptually any number of other relevant actors (Iraq, Russia, Turkey, Egypt, the EU), could be added instead or in addition.
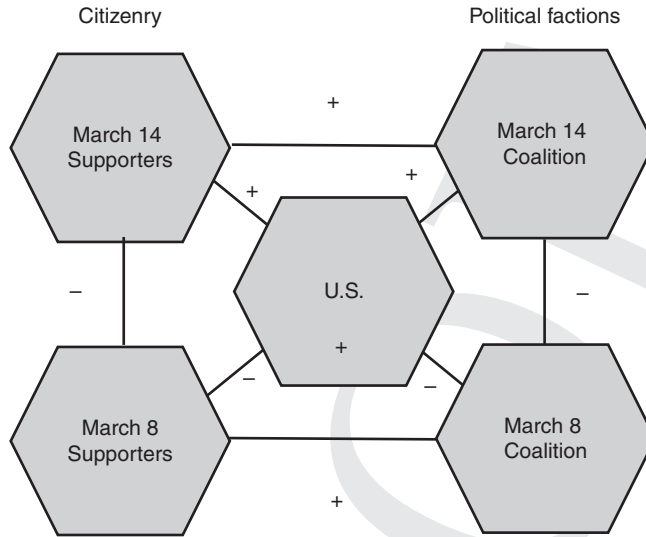
Figure 15.4   Relations within the Lebanese polity to internal coalitions and their relation to the U.S.

Structural Balance Theory is therefore a simple and intuitive tool for understanding others' positions, and for identifying unstable tensions and where the dynamic flipping points in complex sets of relationships are.

Note, too, that citizens living in these complex, unstable, frequently violent, and multi-layered contexts are sensitive to these politics, and their support for different political factions corresponds to their value preferences about foreign relationships. In fact, Pratto, Sidanius et al. (2013) argued that the fraught situation for Lebanon of either attraction to Syria and repulsion from U.S., or the converse, contributes to divisions *within* the Lebanese polity. One of the recent schisms in Lebanese politics consists of two coalitions, one leaning towards the U.S. (March 14) and one towards Syria (March 8). Starting on the right side of Figure 15.4, this simple triad (the two coalitions and the U.S.), coupled with the assumption that each coalition appeals to some Lebanese, produces not only popular support (March 14) or opposition (March 8) to the U.S., but also necessitates divisions among Lebanese citizens in order to provide otherwise balanced relationships. In other words, the intractability of Lebanon's foreign relations helps to divide Lebanon internally.

DISCUSSION

Our chapter both compares and contrasts with Vallacher's (Chapter 13, this volume). Both we and he presume that politics involves multiple actors interacting over time, interactions which produce both local and systemic effects. Vallacher's case allowed simplifying assumptions perhaps not inappropriate to

the political system he studied. But our theoretical analysis contrasts with his in several ways.

We approached the complexities of politics by assuming a dynamic system with many actors and kinds of actors and multiple constraints based in needs and ecological affordances. To discuss politics as power struggles, we used an in-depth analysis of power—its various states, types, kinds, users, and impacts, in theorizing why there are recurrent power struggles in human life. Power Basis Theory argues that the bases of power are particular survival needs, so that everyone must engage in power struggles. Sites of conflict help to indicate what the particular bases of power are (Pratto & Walker, 2004). We tested implications of the theory using comparative studies, surveys, interviews, and experiments, and we examined power within specific social niches, experimental contexts, national contexts, and geo-political contexts. First, we showed that people whose ecologies were impoverished with respect to any of several kinds of power risked ill-health and likely, early death, more than people who have more ingredients for power in their ecologies. This analysis implies that reducing impoverished environments, perhaps along any dimension, and quelling inequality would make whole populations healthier. Second, we reviewed evidence that people's power position changes many of their social psychological outlooks, including those that lead people to invent alternative and/or counter-dominant ideologies. Those designing foreign and domestic policies need to understand and acknowledge the needs, worldviews, and political judgments of those in different power situations. Third, we showed with behavioral experiments that people using power for their own survival goals can create power inequality for others in their context, even without a zero-sum situation or mal-intent. Both this and the fraught situations we saw in the Structural Balance Theory analysis of politics in the Levant demonstrate that helping people have a real sense of security might do much to calm power-striving actions that increase inequality, enmity, and death. Fourth, we showed that people in lower power positions can be quite sensitive to the layered power structures above them. One implication is that people in lower power positions are less politically simplistic and perhaps more sanguine or mistrusting than people in more empowered positions (Bou Zeineddine & Pratto, 2014). Fifth, we demonstrated how networks of political collectives spanning global, regional, national, and transnational levels can produce predictably unstable and divisive politics. We were able to describe these very complex multi-level political relationships by examining only two simple hypotheses regarding power dynamics: a tendency toward balanced social relationships, and the idea that different kinds of power can be fungible through social transaction. Practically, this implies that political projection regarding only certain actors or only at one level will be woefully inadequate under many circumstances, as will *assuming* fundamental (as opposed to surface) stability in intergroup relationships. These first steps demonstrate that social psychology has tools for addressing twenty-first century global political changes.

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