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The Assessment of Political Personality: A Psychodiagnostically Relevant Conceptualization and Methodology

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The purpose of this article is to narrow the conceptual and methodological gap between existing formulations in psychodiagnostic theory and current practice in political personality. It is suggested that accurate assessment of the personalities of high-level leaders can significantly improve the prediction of political outcomes but that this endeavor has been hampered by inadequate transposition from the source disciplines of personality theory and psychodiagnostics to the target discipline of contemporary political psychology. It is proposed that Theodore Millon's personological model offers a viable integrative framework for the study of political personality. The present article explicates Millon's model, specifies the relevance of this formulation to political psychology, and indicates how it may inform theoretical analysis and research in political psychology by accommodating a diverse range of approaches to the psychological examination of political leaders.

KEY WORDS: political personality; personology; political leadership; personality assessment; Millon.

From a clinical psychological perspective, current approaches to the assessment of political personality do not reflect an adequate transposition from the source disciplines of personality theory and psychodiagnostics to the target discipline of political psychology. The purpose of this article is to present a psychodiagnostically coherent alternative to existing conceptual frameworks and assessment methodologies for the study of political personality.

Ideally, conceptual systems for the study of political personality should be anchored to a comprehensive, integrative, theoretically coherent framework ca-
pable of accommodating politically relevant personal characteristics. This need is strongly implied in Millon’s (1986a) definition of personality:

The construct “personality” represents a psychic system of structures and functions. ... It is not a potpourri of unrelated traits and miscellaneous behaviors, but a tightly-knit organization of stable structures (e.g., internalized memories and self-images) and coordinated functions (e.g., unconscious mechanisms and cognitive processes). ... [a]n integrated pattern of characteristics and inclinations that are deeply etched, cannot be easily eradicated, and pervade every facet of life experience. ... [a] distinctive configuration of interlocking perceptions, feelings, thoughts, and behaviors. (p. 643)

The study of political personality has traditionally been more political than personological. Lasswell’s (1930) early formulation, for example, identified three political (as opposed to personality) types: agitator, administrator, and theorist. The same orientation to political personality is reflected in Barber’s (1965) fourfold categorization of legislative types: lawmaker, advertiser, spectator, and reluctant.

More recent conceptualizations of political personality have been more closely allied to personology. Hermann’s (1974, 1978, 1980, 1984) conceptual scheme accommodates four kinds of personal characteristics affecting the content and style of political decision-making: motives, beliefs, decision style, and interpersonal style. Though Hermann’s framework has been successfully applied to describe and predict the political behavior of numerous high-level leaders, it is only peripherally related to current personological and psychodiagnostic conceptualizations. Recent reformulations in Hermann’s conceptual scheme (Hermann, 1987; Winter, Hermann, Weintraub, & Walker, 1991) specifying six broad foreign policy role orientations and their component personal characteristics constitute a significant advance. Nonetheless, though Hermann’s scheme yields a description of politically relevant personality traits and behaviors, it does not specify how these are nested in the “stable structures’ and “coordinated functions” that constitute Millon’s definition of personality.

Barber’s (1977) conceptualization of presidential character types—active-positive, active-negative, passive-positive, and passive-negative—represents yet another departure from current psychodiagnostic formulations of personality. His four “basic character patterns” (p. 12) should be viewed as temperamental (that is, having a predisposition to activity and emotionality) patterns rather than character or personality types. Though psychodiagnostically relevant, temperament (in isolation from other clinically relevant attributes) provides an inadequate basis for construing personality. Assessments derived primarily from the study of motives (e.g., Winter, 1973, 1980, 1987) present the psychodiagnostician with similar difficulties.

Another approach to the study of political personality is to attach diagnostic labels to politicians. Thus, descriptions of authoritarian personalities, Machiavellians, “hardball players,” and malignant narcissists permeate the pages of the literature on political personality. Strong as their links to personality theory and
psychodiagnostics might be, these political types are not derived from a coherent typology of political personalities, thus restricting their usefulness.

Though young as an identifiable and autonomous academic field (see Sears & Funk, 1991) it is not too early for political psychology to achieve greater sophistication in the study of political personality. Toward this end, the primary requirement is the identification or construction of a conceptually coherent theoretical framework and methodology; as stated by Millon (1991), “unrelated knowledge and techniques, especially those based on surface similarities, are a sign of a primitive science” (p. 358). Knutson’s (1973) insightful critique of personality in the study of politics, enunciated two decades ago, is as relevant now as it was then:

In order to operationalize a research design in which personality is hypothesized to have an integral part, the political psychologist must first conceptualize clearly what he means by the concept personality. The next step is to delineate attributes of personality which can be subjected to scientific study . . . as well as to specify how these attributes . . . relate to the concept as a whole. . . . [P]olitical psychologists have unnecessarily limited the methods they have employed to study personality. (pp. 34–35, 37)


Conceptually, the theoretical diversity of Millon’s (1990, 1991) evolutionary model renders it sufficiently comprehensive to accommodate some of the major tenets of psychoanalysis, classical and operant conditioning, humanistic psychology, and cognitive psychology (see Millon, 1991, pp. 366–367, 375, 382, 385). Methodologically, Millon’s framework provides an empirically validated taxonomy of personality patterns compatible with the syndromes described on Axis II of the diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders (DSM-III-R) of the American Psychiatric Association (1987). No present conceptual system in the field of political personality rivals Millon’s model in compatibility with conventional psychodiagnostic methods and standard clinical practice in personality assessment. Finally, no current system matches the elegance with which Millon’s evolutionary model synthesizes normality and psychopathology.

THEODORE MILLON’S MODEL OF PERSONALITY

Millon (1986b) uses the concept of the personality prototype (paralleling the medical concept of the syndrome) as a global formulation for construing and
categorizing personality systems. Horowitz, Post, French, Wallis, and Siegelman (1981) discussed the prototype as a concept in personality psychology as follows:

A prototype consists of the most common features or properties of members of a category and thus describes a theoretical ideal or standard against which real people can be evaluated. . . . The more closely a person approximates the ideal, the more the person typifies the concept. (p. 575)

Following Mischel (1984), Millon (1986b) has proposed that “each personality prototype should comprise a small and distinct group of primary attributes that persist over time and exhibit a high degree of consistency” (p. 681). To Millon the essence of personality categorization is the differential identification of these enduring (stable) and pervasive (consistent) primary attributes. This position is consistent with the conventional view of personality in the study of politics (see Knutson, 1973, pp. 29–38). In organizing his attribute schema, Millon has favored “an arrangement that represents the personality system in a manner similar to that of the body system, that is, dividing the components into structural and functional attributes” (p. 681). Millon specifies a total of eight attribute domains (dimensions) at behavioral, phenomenological, intrapsychic, and biophysical levels of analysis (see Millon, 1990, pp. 134–135), serving as criteria for the differential diagnosis of eight normal personality patterns and their 13 pathological variants. There are thus $8 + 13 = 21$ personality classifications $\times 8$ attribute domains $= 168$ defining features (i.e., diagnostic criteria), a discussion of which would be beyond the scope of the present article. As an aid to the reader, defining terms for the five most easily observable attribute domains linked to the eight normal personality patterns posited by Millon (discussed later

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Personality pattern</th>
<th>Functional attributes</th>
<th>Structural attributes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Expressive acts</td>
<td>Interpersonal conduct</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forceful</td>
<td>Adventurous</td>
<td>Intimidating</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confident</td>
<td>Poised</td>
<td>Unempathic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sociable</td>
<td>Animated</td>
<td>Demonstrative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cooperative</td>
<td>Docile</td>
<td>Compliant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sensitive</td>
<td>Erratic</td>
<td>Unpredictable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respectful</td>
<td>Organized</td>
<td>Polite</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inhibited</td>
<td>Watchful</td>
<td>Shy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introversive</td>
<td>Passive</td>
<td>Unobtrusive</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Note.** Adapted from *Personality and Its Disorders: A Biosocial Learning Approach* (p. 35) by T. Millon and G. S. Everly, Jr. Copyright 1985 by John Wiley. Used by permission.

1The functional domain regulatory mechanism, which is difficult to measure at a distance, is omitted from Table I.

2The structural domains object representations and regulatory mechanism, which are difficult to measure at a distance, are omitted from Table I.
in this article) are listed in Table I. Space constraints preclude an exhaustive account of descriptions (diagnostic criteria) associated with each of the \(8 \times 5 = 40\) defining terms specified in Table I or the \(21 \times 8 = 168\) defining terms of Millon's full taxonomy. Detailed accounts are provided by Millon (1986b, 1990) and Millon and Everly (1985).

**Functional Attributes**

According to Millon (1986b), "functional characteristics represent dynamic processes that transpire within the intrapsychic world and between the individual and his psychosocial environment" (p. 682). Functional attributes are essentially those processing and modulating features of the personality—behavior, cognitions and perceptions, and intrapsychic regulatory mechanisms—"which manage, adjust, transform, coordinate, balance, discharge, and control" the transactions between the inner (intrapsychic) and outer (social) life of the individual (p. 682). Millon (1986b, 1990) has specified four functional attributes relevant to personality, as outlined below. Where relevant, areas of overlap between Millon's attribute domains and existing formulations in the field of political psychology are pointed out.

1. *Expressive acts* (see Table I), which are located at the behavioral level of analysis (see Millon, 1990, p. 135), refer to the observables of physical and verbal behavior, usually recorded by noting what people do and how they do it. Through inference, observations of overt behavior allow the clinician to deduce what individuals unknowingly reveal about themselves or what they wish others to think or know about them (Millon, 1986b; 1990, p. 137). Numerous personality traits commonly used to describe political behavior can be accommodated by this functional attribute, including competence, optimism/pessimism, arrogance, suspiciousness, impulsiveness, prudence, perfectionism, and defensiveness.

2. *Interpersonal conduct* (see Table I), which is located at the behavioral level of analysis (see Millon, 1990, p. 135), refers to people's style of relating to others, for example, the manner in which their actions affect others (whether intended or not), the attitudes that underlie, prompt, and give shape to these actions, the methods by which people engage others to meet their needs, or their way of coping with social tensions and conflicts (such as intimidation, compliance, politeness, aloofness). Extrapolating from these observations, an image may be constructed of how the person functions in relation to others (Millon, 1986b; 1990, pp. 137, 146). This functional attribute is consistent with Hermann's (1974, 1978, 1980, 1984) *interpersonal style*, and other approaches utilizing concepts such as Machiavellianism (e.g., Christie & Geis, 1970) and task- versus relationship-orientation (e.g., Stogdill's, 1974, Leader Behavior Description Questionnaire and Fiedler's, 1978, Least Preferred Co-Worker Scale).
3. **Cognitive style** (see Table I), which is located at the phenomenological level of analysis (see Millon, 1990, p. 135), refers to people’s perception of events, focusing of attention, information processing, organization of thoughts, and communication of reactions and ideas to others (Millon, 1986b; 1990, p. 146). This functional attribute is compatible with Hermann’s (1974, 1978, 1980, 1984) *beliefs* and *decision style*, and can accommodate related concepts such as ethnocentrism, nationalism (Hermann, 1980, 1987), locus of control (Rotter, 1966), conceptual complexity (Kelly, 1955), schemas, scripts, belief systems, and operational codes (George, 1969; Leites, 1951, 1953; Merton, 1940; Walker, 1983, 1990).

4. **Regulatory mechanism**, which is located at the intrapsychic level of analysis (see Millon, 1990, p. 135), refers to internal processes—usually at an unconscious level—intended to achieve need gratification, self-protection, and conflict resolution (for example, rationalization, dissociation, reaction formation, and projection). These mechanisms are more difficult to discern and describe than more readily observable psychological processes, yet the task of identifying which mechanisms are chosen and the extent to which they are employed is central to a comprehensive personality assessment (Millon, 1986b; 1990, pp. 146–147). This functional attribute can accommodate psychodynamic formulations (such as political-psychological psychobiographies) emphasizing psychosexual development and ego-defense mechanisms. Moreover, it provides a suitable fit for contemporary formulations emphasizing needs for power, achievement, or affiliation as encountered in the *motives* category of Hermann’s (1974, 1978, 1980, 1984, 1987) conceptual scheme and in the work of Winter and his associates (Winter, 1973, 1980, 1987, 1991; Winter & Carlson, 1988; Winter & Stewart, 1977, 1978).

### Structural Attributes

According to Millon (1986b), structural attributes “represent a deeply embedded and relatively enduring template of imprinted memories, attitudes, needs, fears, conflicts . . . which guide the experience and transform the nature of ongoing life events” (p. 683). These more or less stable and organized cognitive-affective structures “contain the internalized residues of the past in the form of memories and affects that are associated intrapsychically with conceptions of self and others” (p. 683). Millon (1986b, 1990) has specified four structural attributes, as outlined below. Where relevant, areas of overlap between Millon’s attribute domains and existing formulations in the field of political psychology are pointed out.

1. **Self-image** (see Table I), which is located at the phenomenological level of analysis (see Millon, 1990, p. 135), refers to an individual’s perception of self-as-object—the self-identity that provides a measure of continuity to changing
experience (Millon, 1986b; 1990, pp. 148–149). Individual variations on this structural dimension are conveyed by descriptive terms such as “assertive,” “confident,” “charming,” or “conscientious.” This structural attribute could accommodate Ziller’s theory of self-other orientation (Ziller, 1973; Ziller, Stone, Jackson, & Terbovic, 1977), which uses self-esteem/self-complexity interactions to classify politicians as either political or apolitical types. This structural attribute also seems to be a congenial point of reference for humanistically oriented theories and for social-psychological concepts such as social comparison (Festinger, 1954; Wood, 1989) and social identity and categorization (Tajfel, 1978).

2. **Object representations**, located at the phenomenological level of analysis (see Millon, 1990, p. 135), refer to the “inner imprint” left by significant past experiences, the structural residue composed of memories, attitudes, and affects that serve as a substrate of dispositions for perceiving and reacting to life’s ongoing events. Post’s (e.g., 1991) characterization of Saddam Hussein as a “malignant narcissist” and Parson’s (1991) related analysis of the “Nebuchadnezzar imperial complex,” both of which rely strongly on reconstructions of Saddam’s political socialization, are conceptually related to this structural attribute. Phenomenologically, individual differences with reference to object representations are associated with variations in the character (nature) and substance (content) of one’s inner world (Millon, 1986b; 1990, p. 149). The nature of this attribute domain may be conveyed by citing Millon’s (1990) description of the active-independent personality sadistic subtype, which appears to reflect some of the inner representations implied in Parson’s (1991) and Post’s (1991) analyses of Saddam Hussein: “Inner representations are best distinguished by the presence of strongly driven aggressive energies and malicious attitudes, as well as by a contrasting paucity of sentimental memories, tender affects, internal conflicts, shame, or guilt feelings” (p. 152). Accurate assessment of this structural attribute requires a high degree of psychodiagnostic expertise; moreover, it is extremely difficult to evaluate this attribute at a distance.

3. **Morphologic organization**, which is located at the intrapsychic level of analysis (see Millon, 1990, p. 135), is described by Millon (1986b; 1990, pp. 149, 157) as the personality system’s structural strength (cohesion), interior congruity (coordination among components), and functional efficacy (mechanisms to maintain balance and harmony, regulate internal conflicts, or mediate external pressures). This dimension, too, is difficult to assess—particularly at a distance—as it generally has to be “almost exclusively derived from inferences at the ‘intrapsychic level’ of analysis” (Millon, 1990, p. 149) and therefore is of limited use to political psychologists. Fortunately, accurate personality classification does not require a comprehensive assessment of each of the eight (four structural, four functional) attribute domains common to all personality types.

4. **Mood/temperament** (see Table I), which is located at the biophysical level of analysis (see Millon, 1990, p. 135), refers to the predominant character
of one's affect and its expression (for example, anger, hostility, pessimism, restraint, or uneasiness). The "meaning" of extreme emotions is relatively easy to decode. More subtle moods and feelings that insidiously and repetitively pervade people's ongoing relationships are revealed indirectly in their level of activity, speech quality, and physical appearance (Millon, 1986b; 1990, p. 157). This structural attribute provides a suitable fit for Barber's (1977) active-positive, active-negative, passive-positive, and passive-negative temperamental patterns.

**Difficulties in Adapting Millon's Attribute Domains to Political Psychology**

At the conceptual level the major problem in adapting Millon's system to the study of political personality is that the political-psychological utility of the functional attributes object representations and morphologic organization is questionable. These attributes, at best, would be difficult (if not impossible) to assess at a distance. Additionally, political psychologists without specialized clinical training would be ill-equipped to deal with these constructs. Methodologically, this is not a major obstacle, as a valid personality assessment can be conducted on the basis of any subset of selected attribute domains; increasing the number of attribute domains merely increases the reliability of the assessment.

**Theoretical Dimensions of Basic Coping Styles**

In his original biosocial-learning model Millon (1969, 1981) posited eight basic personality disorders (with three more severe variants) conceptualized in a 2 × 4 matrix constructed on the basis of an active-passive polarity of instrumental behavior and four self-other orientations pertaining to the source of reinforcement. He later (see Millon, 1986a, 1986b; Millon & Everly, 1985) specified eight normal personality patterns and added two dysfunctional subtypes to the taxonomy (see Table II). Millon's (1990, 1991) subsequent evolutionary model is conceptually more complex, replacing the active-passive × self-other matrix with a three-dimensional model. The pleasure-pain dimension implied in earlier references to "instrumental behavior" and "source of reinforcement" with regard, respectively, to the active-passive polarity and the four self-other orientations is now explicitly defined as a distinct polarity. In short, the evolutionary model specifies three interacting polarities: pleasure-pain, active-passive, and self-other. The Millon Index of Personality Styles (Millon, 1993) assesses these three polarities in terms of six "motivating aims," namely life-enhancing/life-preserving, active-modifying/passive-accommodating, and self-advancing/other-promoting. In spite of this reformulation the new three-dimensional model accounts for the same personality types and disorders as its two-dimensional
biosocial-learning forerunner. The changes essentially reflect a more accurate theoretical conceptualization but the taxonomic system yielded by the model remains intact. Refinements in the personological model thus relate to its conceptual precision rather than its nosological derivations and have no effect on the practical assessment of personality.

The pleasure-pain polarity. The pleasure-pain polarity is conceptualized in terms of life enhancement and life preservation respectively: “acts that are ‘attracted’ to what we experientially record as ‘pleasurable’ events (positive reinforcers) . . . [and] behaviors oriented to repel events experientially characterized as ‘painful’ (negative reinforcers)” (Millon, 1991, p. 372). It is clear that Millon regards this polarity as the most profound (see Millon, 1991, p. 377) of the three polarities, as anticipated by the biosocial-learning label attached to his original (1969, 1981) theoretical formulations. As such, consideration of this polarity cannot be divorced from a discussion of the other two polarities with which it interacts, as will be evident in the next two sections.

The passive-active polarity. In terms of Millon’s earlier (1981) biosocial-learning model, the passive-active polarity refers to the nature of characteristic instrumental strategies employed to maximize pleasure or avoid pain:

Descriptively, those who are typically active tend to be characterized by their alertness, vigilance, persistence, decisiveness, and ambitiousness in a goal-directed behavior. They plan strategies, scan alternatives, manipulate events, and circumvent obstacles, all to the end of eliciting pleasures and rewards, or avoiding the distress of punishment, rejection, and anxiety [i.e., the pleasure-pain polarity]. Although their goals may differ from time to time, they initiate events and are enterprising and energetically intent on controlling the circumstances of their environment. By contrast, passive personalities engage in few overtly manipulative strategies to gain their ends [i.e., to enhance pleasure or avoid pain]. They often display a seeming inertness, a lack of ambition and persistence, an acquiescence, and a resigned attitude in which they initiate little to shape events and wait for the circumstances of their environment to take their course. (p. 60)

Millon’s more recent (1991) evolutionary reformulation conceptualizes this polarity in terms of, respectively, ecologic modification and ecologic adaptation: Thus

the active-passive polarity means that the vast range of behaviors engaged in by humans may fundamentally be grouped in terms of whether initiative is taken in altering and shaping life’s events or whether behaviors are reactive to and accommodate those events. (p. 374)

It is clear that Millon’s characterization of the active-passive polarity is linked to a number of important psychological principles (e.g., Hartmann’s, 1939, ego psychology and Skinner’s, 1938, 1953, distinction between classical and operant conditioning; see Millon, 1991, p. 375). As stated earlier, the same cannot be said of Barber’s (1977) typology, where the activity-passivity dimension is described purely in terms of energy invested in the political office.

Self-other orientation. In Millon’s earlier (1981) biosocial-learning model, the self-other dimension specified four distinct sources of reinforcement. Inde-
pendent personalities rely on themselves to maximize pleasure and minimize pain; they are self-oriented. Dependent personalities have learned that feelings associated with pleasure (such as security or confidence) are best provided by others; being other-oriented, they have a strong need for external support and attention. Ambivalent personalities experience conflict between depending on themselves and depending on others for reinforcement; some ambivalent people (active-ambivalent) vacillate between dependence and independence, whereas others (passive-ambivalent) do not vacillate as such but remain outwardly dependent and compliant while harboring a strong inner desire for independence—often accompanied by hostile feelings and impulses. Detached personalities are characterized either by a diminished ability to experience both pleasure and pain (passive-detached), or by a diminished ability to experience pleasure, juxtaposed with a hyperreactivity to pain (active-detached); clearly, detached types are unable to experience rewards from themselves or others and are therefore both self- and socially alienated (Millon, 1981, p. 59). Millon’s more recent (1991) evolutionary reformulation conceptualizes the self-other polarity in terms of, respectively, reproductive propagation and reproductive nurturance: “the third polarity . . . contrasts the maximization of reproductive propagation (self-male) from that of the maximization of nurturance (other-female)” (p. 377). Millon (1991) notes, however, that these are “conceptually derived extremes [that] do not evince themselves in sharp and distinct gender differences” (p. 392). Aside from obvious similarities between the self-other polarity and the competition versus cooperation dichotomy studied by social psychologists, educators, and others, Millon (1991, pp. 398–399) specifically links this polarity with constructs associated with several major personality theories, including those of Jung, Perls, Maslow, and Rogers.

Millon’s Taxonomy of Personality Types and Disorders

A schematic outline of Millon’s (1969, 1981, 1986b) classification system of personality disorders, as assessed by the Millon Clinical Multiaxial Inventory-II (MCMI; Millon, 1987) and the Millon Personality Diagnostic Checklist (MPDC; Millon & Green, 1987; Millon, Tringone, et al., in press), is presented in Table II. As shown in Table II, each of the 13 personality disorders (eight basic pathological patterns, two subtypes, and three more severe variants) is a pathological version of one of the eight normal personality patterns derived from the 2 (active-passive) × 4 (self-other) reinforcement matrix associated with Millon’s earlier biosocial-learning model.

Millon has championed the view that personality disorders are simply “exaggerated and pathologically distorted deviations emanating from a normal and healthy distribution of traits” (1985, p. 34). From a practical perspective, this
Table II: Millon’s Classification of Normal Coping Styles and Pathological Variants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reinforcement strategy</th>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Personality prototype</th>
<th>Normal</th>
<th>Disordered</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Active</td>
<td>Independent</td>
<td>Forceful</td>
<td>Normal</td>
<td>Disordered</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Passive</td>
<td>Independent</td>
<td>Confident</td>
<td>Narcissistic (egotistic) Aggressive (sadistic)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Active</td>
<td>Dependent</td>
<td>Sociable</td>
<td>Histrionic (gregarious)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Passive</td>
<td>Dependent</td>
<td>Cooperative</td>
<td>Dependent (submissive)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Active</td>
<td>Ambivalent</td>
<td>Sensitive</td>
<td>Passive-aggressive (negativistic) (masochistic) Self-defeating</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Passive</td>
<td>Ambivalent</td>
<td>Respectful</td>
<td>Compulsive (conforming)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Active</td>
<td>Detached</td>
<td>Inhibited</td>
<td>Avoidant (withdrawn)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Passive</td>
<td>Detached</td>
<td>Introverted</td>
<td>Schizoid (asocial)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Severe personality disorders are excluded from the table. These are: schizotypal (eccentric), a variant of detached types; borderline (unstable), a variant of dependent and ambivalent types; and paranoid (suspicious), a variant of independent and ambivalent types.  

*aActive-independent subtypes.  
*bActive-ambivalent subtypes.

syndromal continuity view is of particular relevance to the study of political personality because it allows one to predict the direction in which a high-level leader’s personality functioning might deteriorate under conditions of persistent or severe situational stress. A problem (see Sears, Peplau, & Taylor, 1991, pp. 532–533) with existing conceptualizations is the dichotomy between pathology-oriented analyses (e.g., Lasswell, 1930, 1948; George & George, 1956; Mazlish, 1972; Rogow, 1963) and competence/efficacy-oriented analyses (e.g., Lane, 1959; Renshon, 1974). In addressing both normality and pathology, Millon’s model bridges this gap.

Millon’s eight basic personality styles are presented in Table II, in juxtaposition to their maladaptive variants. The Millon Behavioral Health Inventory (MBHI; Millon, Green, & Meagher, 1982) was developed to classify the general (i.e., nonpsychiatric) adult population in terms of the eight basic personality patterns. A more recent development is the Millon Index of Personality Styles (Millon, 1993).

**TOWARD THE DEVELOPMENT OF A TAXONOMY OF POLITICAL TYPES**

In deriving a taxonomy of political personality types from Millon’s framework there is probably little need for including Millon’s two detached (introverted/asocial and inhibited/avoidant) patterns, as such individuals would be un-
likely to attain high political office. Though Barber’s (1977) passive-negative type (the politician who serves largely from a sense of duty) appears to have some qualities (such as behavioral lethargy and interpersonal aloofness) in common with the defining features of Millon’s passive-detached type, Millon’s passive-ambivalent type is more suitable for accommodating Barber’s passive-negative leader. Millon’s passive-dependent (cooperative/submissive) pattern also appears to be of less interest to political psychology. Once again, though some similarities exist between the defining features of this type and Barber’s passive-positive type (the receptive, compliant, other-directed leader), Millon’s active-dependent pattern would provide a better fit. The personality patterns of greatest potential relevance appear to be the following:

1. The active-independent (forceful/aggressive) pattern is politically relevant in terms of possibly excessive needs for power and dominance (perhaps even antisocial behavior) in its maladaptive (aggressive) form. Many politicians demonstrate features of this personality pattern; prototypical examples of the adaptive and maladaptive variants respectively might be former British Prime Minister Winston Churchill and contemporary Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein. The defining features of the adaptive (forceful) variant of this type appear to have much in common with Barber’s (1977) description of the active-positive character pattern. Three of Hermann’s (1987) more recently formulated personality orientations are consistent with Millon’s active-independent type: her active-independent and influential orientations seem to correspond to the adaptive, forceful pattern; her expansionist orientation reflects the maladaptive, aggressive variant of this pattern (though it is also somewhat consistent with the maladaptive, narcissistic variant of Millon’s passive-independent personality).

2. The active-dependent (sociable/histrionic) pattern is politically relevant because of a potentially high need for affiliation, which in its maladaptive (histrionic) form may contribute to neglect of the role demands of political office, low resistance to corrupting influences, and impulsiveness. Though admittedly speculative, a possible political prototype might be former U.S. President Ronald Reagan, who was criticized on occasion for favoring loyalty and friendship over competence-for-the-position in making appointments to high-level public office. With regard to the adaptive (sociable) variant of the active-dependent personality, U.S. President Bill Clinton’s animated expressive behavior during the 1992 presidential campaign is quite characteristic of this personality type. Hermann’s (1987) mediator/integrator orientation seems consistent with the adaptive variant of Millon’s active-dependent personality type, as does—to a lesser extent—Barber’s (1977) passive-positive configuration.

3. The passive-independent (confident/narcissistic) pattern is politically relevant by virtue of the risk, in its maladaptive (narcissistic) form, for exploitative-ness and possibly a tendency to indulge in macho adventures that may be at variance with political stability. A contemporary political prototype might be
Libya’s Muammar Qaddafi. This personality type provides theoretical justification for the notion that “hardball politics” (Etheredge, 1979) is an outward manifestation of underlying personality functioning. There is a strong correspondence between the adaptive (confident) form of the passive-independent pattern and Hermann’s opportunistic orientation. Hermann’s expansionist orientation bears some resemblance to the maladaptive (narcissistic) variant of this personality pattern.

4. The passive-ambivalent (respectful/conforming) pattern is politically relevant because of a possible connection (for example, conventionalism and authoritarian aggression or submission) with the syndrome referred to by Adorno, Frenkel-Brunswik, Levinson, and Sanford (1950), as the “authoritarian personality.” Perhaps more significantly, Barber’s (1977) active-negative type, with its combination of power-seeking and compulsiveness, has much in common with the passive-ambivalent pattern. It seems at first glance a contradiction to associate this pattern with authoritarian and active-negative types (both of which have strong power orientations). Recall, however, that the outward dependence of the passive-ambivalent personality with regard to sources of reinforcement is underpinned by a strong inner desire for independence (hence the ambivalence). Former South African President P. W. Botha apparently displayed some features of this personality pattern (see Geldenhuys & Kotzé, 1985; Immelman, 1988), although he would be more accurately characterized as an active-independent personality. The circumspection (often labeled “prudence”), restraint, and loyalty displayed by former U.S. President George Bush throughout his political career are central features of the adaptive (respectful) variant of Millon’s passive-ambivalent personality pattern.

5. The paranoid personality, in terms of the syndromal continuity hypothesis referred to earlier, is a severely disordered extension of independent (passive-independent narcissistic and active-independent aggressive) and of some ambivalent personalities. This decompensated pattern provides an almost perfect fit for the malignant narcissist syndrome described by Post (1991) and for Parson’s (1991) “malignant narcissistic paranoid personality . . . comprised of narcissistic malignancy and paranoid pathology” (p. 36).

CONCLUSION

Ironically, existing approaches to political personality bear little resemblance to the conceptualization of personality shared by most clinically trained professional psychodiagnosticians. While it is true that clinical psychodiagnostics emphasizes disordered personality, Millon (1990, 1991; Millon & Everly, 1985) has shown that there is no conceptual distinction between normal and abnormal personality; conceptually, personality disorders are merely patholog-
ical distortions of normal personality attributes. This article has argued that Millon’s personological model can serve as an integrative framework for a variety of current approaches to political personality, thus narrowing conceptual and methodological gaps between existing formulations in the source disciplines of personology and psychodiagnostic theory and the target discipline of contemporary political personality.

In closing, the focus of the present article on the noun in political psychology does not in any way diminish the importance of the adjective in the phrase. It is recognized that adequate description, explanation, and prediction of political behavior in high-level public office demands an accurate grasp of relevant contextual and role-related variables that may modify the expression of the officeholder’s personality. The political relevance of conceptual frameworks such as Millon’s—focusing as they do primarily on dispositional determinants of behavior—is limited by their psychological emphasis. It is rather obvious that political personology cannot divorce itself from the kind of expertise that is the province of the political scientist. Knowledge of political structures and political decision-making processes in specific political systems is crucial if one is to infer the role of the characteristics of political leaders in political policies and practices or if one is to predict future behaviors of leaders or governments under various contingencies. Clearly, a diagnostically relevant conceptualization and methodology for the politically relevant study of personality is best informed by a multidisciplinary perspective anchored both to politics and to psychology.

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