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THINKING ABOUT POLITICAL PSYCHOLOGY

In this volume, political psychologists take a hard look at political psychology. They pose, and then address, the kinds of tough questions that those outside the field would be inclined to ask and those inside should be able to answer satisfactorily. Not everyone will agree with the answers the authors provide, and in some cases, the best an author can do is offer well-grounded speculations. Nonetheless, the chapters raise questions that will lead to an improved political psychology and will generate further discussion and research in the field.

The individual chapters are organized around four themes. Part I tries to define political psychology and provides an overview of the field. Part II raises questions about theory and empirical methods in political psychology. Part III contains arguments ranging from the position that the field is too heavily psychological to the view that it is not psychological enough. Part IV considers how political psychologists might best connect individual-level mental processes to aggregate outcomes.

James H. Kuklinski is a professor in the Department of Political Science and the Institute of Government and Public Affairs at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. He has served on the boards of the *American Political Science Review*, the *American Journal of Political Science*, the *Journal of Politics*, *Legislative Studies Quarterly*, and *Political Behavior*, and he has published articles in these and other journals.

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This series has been established in recognition of the growing sophistication in the resurgence of interest in political psychology and the study of public opinion. Its focus will range from the kinds of mental processes that people employ when they think about democratic processes and make political choices to the nature and consequences of macrolevel public opinion.

We expect that some of the works will draw on developments in cognitive and social psychology and relevant areas of philosophy. Appropriate subjects would include the use of heuristics, the roles of core values and moral principles in political reasoning, the effects of expertise and sophistication, the roles of affect and emotion, and the nature of cognition and information processing. The emphasis will be on systematic and rigorous empirical analysis, and a wide range of methodologies will be appropriate: traditional surveys, experimental surveys, laboratory experiments, focus groups, in-depth interviews, and others. We intend that these empirically oriented studies will also consider normative implications for democratic politics generally.

Politics, not psychology, will be the primary focus, and it is expected that most works will deal with mass publics and democratic politics, although work on nondemocratic publics will not be excluded. Other works will examine traditional topics in public opinion research, as well as contribute to the growing literature on aggregate opinion and its role in democratic societies.

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