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Looking into the Hearts of the Workers, or: **How Erich Fromm Turned Critical Theory** into Empirical Research

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This paper provides an appraisal of the first opinion survey which applied modern psychological methods to the investigation of electoral and political behavior. The survey was conducted from 1929 to 1931 among white-collar and blue-collar workers in Weimar Germany. Despite questions of authorship, purpose, ideological biases, and technical problems, it warrants attention not only as a historical document; it also constitutes a provocative example of empirical research which can still provide food for thought for today's students of political psychology. It (a) demonstrates how opinion surveys can be inspired by psychoanalytic technique; (b) proposes a reasonable way of assessing the depth of democratic commitment; (c) advances a nonreductionist hypothesis concerning the interrelation of personality and politics; (d) takes into account internal contradictions in political attitudes and behavior; (e) relates to respondents as active subjects embedded in a network of social relations; and (f) puts to use intuitions from past and present political theory.

KEY WORDS: authoritarianism; attitudes; authoritarian personality; democratic commitment; democratic personality; Erich Fromm; Frankfurt School; opinion survey; private and public; Weimar Germany; workers.

INTRODUCTION

This paper is devoted to a detailed examination of an empirical study of political practices and consciousness of the working class (skilled and unskilled blue-collar workers, white-collar workers in the private sector, and civil servants) in Weimar Germany. The study was conducted by the Frankfurt Institute of Social Research between 1929 and 1931, its data was evaluated by Erich Fromm in 1937-1938, and it was published for the first time in a German

Brunner

632

translation in 1980. Even though quite a few facts concerning the design and authorship of this study remain obscure, there can be no doubt concerning its historical significance.

First, it constitutes the most important project with which Fromm was associated in the days of his membership at the Frankfurt Institute for Social Research (the so-called "Frankfurt School"). Second, it was the most notable empirical research enterprise undertaken at the Institute in the prewar period. Third, and most importantly, it was the first opinion survey which undertook to apply modern psychological methods to the investigation of electoral and political behavior. Thus, it undoubtedly constitutes a significant document in the history of the social sciences.

One might argue that since Fromm's evaluation of the Institute's data on the private and public practices of German workers remained in a drawer for more than four decades, it is not surprising that it did not receive the attention it deserved. However, both its German and English publications (Fromm, 1980a, 1984)—the latter is entitled *The Working Class in Weimar Germany: A Psychological and Sociological Study*—also have failed to evoke a significant response in the scholarly literature. I have found only three references to the book: Rolf Wiggershaus devotes a few pages to it in his monumental historical and theoretical discussion of the Frankfurt School (Wiggershaus, 1988, pp. 193–199). Susanna Feist's review, published in the pages of this journal eight years ago, uncritically follows the presentation of the research in Wolfgang Bonss's introductory essay to Fromm's manuscript (Feist, 1986; cf. Bonss 1984). Franz Samelson re-examines the history of the research, but reaches the conclusion that the publication of the study "as an important scientific contribution is not supported by a critical reading of the text" (Samelson, 1993, p. 32).

In contrast to the research conducted in Weimar Germany, *The Authoritarian Personality*, the famous research into antidemocratic undercurrents in the U.S. conducted by the Berkeley group during the war, has given rise to an enormous body of empirical and theoretical secondary literature, in which its fundamental assumptions, research methods, and conclusions have been supported, debated, replicated, or criticized (for a recent comprehensive survey of the relevant approaches and literature, cf. Stone et al., 1993, pp. 159–181). As a rule this study, which was conducted by Theodor W. Adorno, Else Frenkel-Brunswick, Daniel J. Levinson, and R. Nevitt Sanford, has been considered *the* pioneering empirical study in which members of the Frankfurt School played a central role. It appears that, as Samelson has indicated, the "prehistory" of *The Authoritarian Personality* has been largely ignored by contemporary political psychologists because it has been considered to belong to the "prescientific" phase of social research (Samelson, 1993, p. 23).

In this paper I wish to remedy what I consider to be a regrettable oversight. I argue that Fromm's manuscript warrants attention not only as a historical docu-

ment. As I show in the course of this article, despite a number of problems and shortcomings, it constitutes a provocative piece of data evaluation and its interpretive method can still provide food for thought for contemporary students of political psychology. Thus, what I attempt to do here, is a critical but sympathetic appraisal of Fromm's approach. However, before devoting my attention to an examination of the latter's purpose, method, results and conclusions, I wish to provide a brief outline of the historical background of the opinion survey and its interpretation.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

In 1930 Fromm received a formal appointment as head of social psychological research at the Frankfurt Institute of Social Research (Wehr, 1990, pp. 16–17). In the same year Max Horkheimer assumed the reins of the Institute and called for interdisciplinary research to overcome the segregation between philosophy and science, and among the various fields in the social sciences and the humanities (cf. Held, 1980, p. 32). As Horkheimer pointed out, cooperation between philosophers, sociologists, economists, historians, and psychologists was needed to throw light on "the connections between economic life [and] . . . the psychic development of the individual" (cited in Bonss, 1984a, p. 17; cf. Wiggershaus, 1988, p. 52).

Under the impact of unemployment, hyperinflation and the collapse of the stock exchanges in 1929, members of the Frankfurt School were convinced that capitalism was crisis-prone in the way in which Marx had predicted. However, they also realized that the German labor movement not only failed to bring about a socialist revolution, but also showed little readiness to oppose Hitler on his march to power. Thus, Horkheimer was interested in finding the psychological "cement" of society, which could explain the reluctance of German workers to play the historical role which Marxist theory had ascribed to them. Apparently in order to investigate this question, the Institute for Social Research set out in 1929 to undertake a major empirical study, which encompassed mainly manual and white-collar workers from urban centers between Frankfurt and Berlin (Fromm, 1984, p. 69. From hereon references to *The Working Class in Weimar Germany* will be indicated by page number alone.)

As Bonss has explained, the study was conducted at a time at which hardly any empirical research of this kind was undertaken within an academic framework (Bonss, 1984a, p. 15). The two other early survey projects worth mentioning in the context were Paul Lazersfeld's *Die Arbeitslosen von Marienthal*, which was started in 1930 (cf. Wiggershaus, 1988, p. 190), and Robert and Helen Lynd's *Middletown*, published in 1929 (Lynd, 1929). However, there is a clear difference in style and method between these works on the one hand, and

that of the Frankfurt School on the other. The latter integrated psychodynamic premises into its framework, used a questionnaire in order to uncover hidden personality traits of a particular social class, and thus tried to transform Critical Theory into empirical research.

Without access to documentation from the late 20s and early 30s which could clarify the research question to which the Institute wanted to find an answer at the time, one has to rely on Fromm's postwar statements, in which he defined it as follows: "To what extent do German workers and employees have a character structure which is the opposite to the authoritarian idea of Nazism? And that implied still another question: To what extent will the German workers and employees, in the critical hour fight Nazism?" (Fromm, 1963, p. 148).

As Samelson has pointed out, however, it is not clear who actually had designed the questionnaire, which dates from 1929, that is, from the time before Fromm formally joined the Institute for Social Research (Samelson, 1993, p. 30). Moreover, to confuse matters, in 1936 Horkheimer and Fromm referred to the research as a *Mittelstandsenquete* (middle-class survey) (Samelson, 1993, p. 32). In this context Samelson has indicated that it would be wrong to refer to the research as an enquiry into the working class, and he pointed out that only less than 10% of the respondents had been unskilled workers (Samelson, 1993, p. 32). However, there is no doubt that from a Marxist point of view—which guided the researchers and Fromm's interpretation—skilled manual workers, which constituted 55% of the sample, and white-collar employees, which made up 29% of the subjects, also belong to the working-class. Thus, according to Marxist premises, 93% of the sample were members of the working class; the rest were students, housewives, and small traders (p. 72).

To some extent at least, vacillations and uncertainties in the terminology used by members of the Frankfurt School may be traced to the fact that the theoretical focus of this early empirical study was redefined in the wake of political events and the collection of the data. In fact, shifts in focus and terminology can also be discerned in the history of The Authoritarian Personality. Originally this research had been conceived as a study of ethnocentricity and antisemitism, and of their connection to personality structure (Wiggershaus, 1988, p. 401). The title *The Authoritarian Personality* was agreed upon by the members of the Berkeley group only after completion of the study (Hopf, 1993, pp. 121-122). Indeed, although the famous F Scale—developed and introduced by the Berkeley group—came to be regarded as a measure of hidden authoritarian tendencies, the contributors to The Authoritarian Personality never referred to it explicitly as a scale of authoritarianism. On the contrary, it was termed "F Scale," because it was assumed to measure implicit pre-fascist tendencies and because the researchers identified antisemitic prejudices with fascist leanings. Since fascist tendencies were seen as identical with antidemocratic predispositions, and the latter, in turn, were equated with authoritarian preferences, all these terms came to be seen as interchangeable (Christie, 1954, p. 127).

In this sense, then, one may say that the data collected in the Weimar study and in *The Authoritarian Personality* were interpreted from the same angle; for whatever the original foci of the Weimar and the Berkeley studies were, in the end their data were used to assess the reliability of democratic commitment and to evaluate whether it could be trusted in a crisis situation (cf. Wiggershaus, 1988, pp. 417–418).

The centerpiece of the earlier German research was an extraordinarily long, 271-item questionnaire, which was distributed by volunteers to 3300 skilled workers and employees, including civil servants. Respondents were guaranteed full anonymity; all they had to do was to fill in their answers and mail the questionnaires back to the Institute. By the end of 1931, 1100 questionnaires had arrived for analysis. Obviously, this sample was problematic, as Fromm commented in his interpretation of the data. He claimed that only patient and committed people sat down and spent the time to answer 271 questions. Moreover, since the research appealed above all to politically trained and engaged workers who regarded all matters as connected to politics, he assumed that he had received the various official party lines in response to questions on political issues. But he believed that fewer preconceived answers had been given to questions concerning apparently nonpolitical matters (p. 46; for further comments on technical difficulties of Fromm's questionnaire, cf. Bonss, 1984a, pp. 1–2, 24–25; Samelson, 1993, p. 33).

In any case, this was not the time for a quiet evaluation of research data. From 1932 to 1934 the members of the Institute were on the move, until they found a home in exile at Columbia University in New York. In the course of these turbulent years about half of the questionnaires were lost, and only 584 out of the originally completed 1100 made it safely to the U.S. (Bonss, 1984a, p. 2). This loss made the sampling issue even more problematic. Moreover, by that time the results seemed irrelevant to most members of the Institute.

Nevertheless, Erich Fromm introduced and presented the questionnaire, as well as a small sample of answers—but no comprehensive summary or evaluation of the data—in *Studien über Autorität und Familie*, which Max Horkheimer edited in 1936. Fromm further developed his interpretive approach in an English manuscript, which he wrote in the second half of 1937 or in 1938, entitled "German Workers 1929—A Survey, its Methods and Results," in which he assessed the results of the research in more detail and presented it as focusing on the working class rather than the middle class (Bonss, 1984b, p. 281; Samelson, 1993, p. 32).

Fromm's evaluation of the research data was not published at the time, apparently because it seemed "too Marxist" to Horkheimer, who was afraid that it might harm the Institute's status in the U.S. (Bonss, 1984a, p. 3). Moreover,

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by that time Fromm had already rejected a number of Freud's basic assumptions, such as the death drive, the universality of the Oedipus complex, the centrality of sexuality, and the crucial causal role of early childhood experiences. This revisionism had alienated not only Horkheimer, but also Adorno and Marcuse, who took these Freudian concepts to be a yardstick of political radicalism. As a result of this rift, Fromm left the Institute in 1938 and took with him his manuscript and all relevant documents. (On Fromm's early work, and his complicated relationship and disputes with other members of the Frankfurt School, cf. Bocock, 1976, pp. 150–158; Held, 1980, pp. 112–114; Jacoby, 1975, pp. 13–15; Jay, 1973, pp. 98–105; Marcuse, 1966, pp. 238–274; Rickert, 1986, pp. 351–400; Samelson, 1993, pp. 26–34; Wiggershaus, 1988, pp. 298–307.)

For reasons which also remain unclear, he did not publish the data and his evaluation on his own, and it was turned into a book by Bonss only after Fromm's death, more than 50 years after the actual research had been conducted. This history of the research, which has been sketched here in outline only, makes it advisable to draw a distinction between the original purpose behind the construction of the questionnaire—which remains uncertain—and the intention underlying Fromm's later data evaluation. My discussion will focus exclusively on Fromm's interpretive endeavor.

INTERPRETIVE FRAMEWORK

The declared purpose of Fromm's interpretation of the data gathered in 1929-1931 was "to gain insight into the psychic structure of manual and whitecollar workers" (cited in Bonss, 1984a, p. 1). In terms of methodology, Fromm's approach was strongly influenced by his psychoanalytic background. He assumed that when one aimed to find out something about deeper layers of personality, a respondent's answers could not be taken at face value. In his view, they had to be interpreted in order to establish not only what respondents said with reference to a particular issue, but also why they said it (p. 44). This Freudian approach to free associations could be used in the evaluation of the survey, since it was built on open-ended questions and thus, contrary to contemporary multiple-choice questionnaires, offered no structured choice among preformulated answers. Fromm criticized the latter for suppressing possible replies, suggesting certain "correct" statements, and preventing individual and unique forms of expression. As he explained: "Sometimes the actual content of an answer may be totally unrevealing, whereas the manner of its formulation may throw significant light on the character of the respondent. Someone with sufficient experience of psychological tests can recognize from slight nuances of expression that the respondent may perhaps mean the opposite of what he actually says" (p. 48).

Rather than constructing statistics on the basis of preferences expressed in

responses, Fromm focused on the way in which respondents had phrased their answers and took the use of key words or recurring verbal patterns as clues to unconscious meanings hiding beneath the manifest content of answers. As he put it later, in his eyes this interpretive method was analogous to a psychoanalytic interview, in which the analyst "tries to understand the unconscious meaning of certain phrases and statements used by the patient, a meaning which the patient did not intend to express or is not aware of expressing" (Fromm & Maccoby, 1970, p. 25).

For instance, a respondent had answered the question of how the world could be improved with, "By smashing the ruling class." In another part of the questionnaire, she or he had responded to the question of whether one could bring up children without beating them, with the statement, "No, children need to be beaten in order to teach them respect." In such an instance Fromm concluded that the respondent's hatred of capitalists stemmed from his or her anger against those who are powerful and happy, as well as from an authoritarian wish to dominate those who are weaker (p. 61).

The fact that questions had been vaguely phrased allowed respondents to differ from one another in small—or not so small—details. They were asked, for example, "Who, in your opinion, has the real power in the state today?" Answers given included "parliament," "government," "capital," "capitalists," "industry," "large-scale industry," "fascists," "militarists," "Jews," "banks," and "bourgeoisie." In his interpretation of the responses, Fromm distinguished, for example, between those who referred to the "bourgeoisie" as exercising real power and those which mentioned "capital." In his eyes the former term was more aggressive than the latter, since it blamed a specific group without explaining the situation of the workers by the mechanisms of the capitalist system in general (pp. 82–85).

A large number of questions aimed to establish the political opinions of respondents. They were asked who had real power in the state, what form of government they thought best, how a new world war could be prevented, who was responsible for inflation, what they thought of their party, and whether they trusted the German judiciary. In addition, there was a wide variety of questions which had to do with visual arts, history, literature, music, architecture, family and social life, and hobbies. Respondents had to state, for example, whom they considered the greatest personalities in history, what books they read and what radio programs they listened to, whether they liked jazz, collected stamps, went to church, preferred homeopathy or conventional medicine, attended union meetings, had savings in the bank, and how they decorated their homes. They were asked what photographs they had on their walls, what they considered their favorite plays or films, and what they liked in women's fashions. There were also questions which referred to relationships with colleagues at work, with immediate superiors and friends, as well as to a person's consideration for the work,

638

On the one hand, such data allowed Fromm to generate a comprehensive profile of the political beliefs and disbeliefs of the workers in Weimar Germany, as well as of their self-conception, cultural habits, and family life. It is interesting to note that already in Germany of the early 30s attitudes toward women constituted one of the focal issues of the opinion survey. Fromm found, for instance, that 67% of all respondents (men and women) were in favor of unmarried women working, while only 29% approved employment for married women. Positive responses ranged from 66% to 93% among left-wingers, and from 38% to 29% among bürgerliche and National Socialist respondents (p. 166). However. Fromm related responses not only to party affiliation, but also to family background. He established that there was a higher tendency to approve of the employment of women if respondents had working mothers (p. 168), and that married respondents were less favorable to women's employment than those who were unmarried (p. 170).

On the other hand, Fromm also used these responses as a comprehensive discursive context in which contradictory feelings and conflicting preferences could surface. In this aspect of data evaluation, Fromm was interested only in about 80% of his sample: those who voted for parties of the left, that is, in workers who were explicitly anti-Nazi as far as their political opinions were concerned. Fromm aimed to find out whether the fact that these respondents had party ties to the left also meant that they were committed to democratic values.

It seems that in 1937-1938, when he wrote his manuscript, Fromm was preoccupied with the question of whether the socialist outlook of the German left had been but a façade. In his view, socialist opinions could only be taken seriously if they were grounded in an underlying democratic commitment, which, in turn, had its roots in their character structure. If the German left had an authoritarian character structure which underlaid its socialist views, one could easily see how socialism could be replaced by another ideology, such as Nazism, which provided a better rationalization for authoritarianism. In 1970 he explained (retrospectively):

It followed from this general assumption that only if one had knowledge of the character structure of German workers and employees could one predict their probable reaction to a Nazi victory. The main interest was not the social character in its broad sense, but that aspect most relevant to the Nazi challenge: the authoritarian vs. the democraticrevolutionary character. (Fromm and Maccoby, 1970, p. 25)

Fromm employed terms such as "democratic" or "democratic-revolutionary" to identify the opposite of Nazi authoritarianism only in later writings, which date from the postwar period. In the early 30s he labeled those whom he trusted to oppose Nazism as "socialist" or "radical," and in his contribution to Studien über Autorität und Familie of 1936, Fromm opposed the "authoritarian character" to a "'revolutionary' type," without, however, elaborating what he meant by the latter (Wiggershaus, 1988, 176). In The Working Class in Weimar Germany, Fromm explained that "in the anti-authoritarian attitude which corresponds with Socialist and Communist political doctrine, the freedom and independence of the individual is the prime goal, whereas the opposite is true of the authoritarian attitude" (p. 215).

The way in which Fromm constructed this dichotomy of "radical," "socialist," or "revolutionary," on the one hand, and "authoritarian" on the other hand, indicates that his interpretation was not concerned with the juxtaposition of socialism and capitalism, that is, with the support for private or social property of means of production. Even though he did not use these terms, his concern clearly was directed at the presence or absence of underlying democratic values and character traits.

How, then did Fromm define the authoritarian attitude? He regarded it as characteristic of a person who seeks to dominate those who are considered weak and to keep them in a state of dependency similar to the one in which she or he feels herself or himself in relation to authority figures (p. 215). In Fromm's own words, the authoritarian attitude "affirms, seeks out and enjoys the subjugation of men under higher external power, whether this power is the state or a leader. natural law, the past or God. The strong and powerful are simply admired and loved for these qualities, the weak and helpless hated and despised. Sacrifice and duty, and not pleasure in life and happiness, are the guiding aims of the authoritarian attitude" (pp. 209-210).

This definition prefigures some central elements of the Berkeley group's later definition of the authoritarian personality, which divides it into a syndrome composed of nine clusters. The second cluster, entitled "authoritarian submission," is described as referring to a "submissive, uncritical attitude toward idealized moral authorities of the ingroup"; the third has to do with "authoritarian aggression"; and the sixth comes closest to Fromm's conception: it describes "preoccupation with the dominance-submission, strong-weak, leader-follower dimension; identification with power figures . . . exaggerated assertion of strength and toughness" (Adorno et al., 1950, p. 228). Despite a number of theoretical differences, which cannot be elaborated here, one may thus credit Fromm with providing some of the theoretical foundations for the Berkeley study.

Moreover, the most up-to-date definition of right-wing authoritarianism, which has been provided by Bob Altemeyer—who probably is the most prominent scholar in the field today—also confirms that Fromm's description captured the essential elements of the phenomenon as they are defined in the contemporary literature. Altemeyer depicts right-wing authoritarianism as a combination of authoritarian submission, authoritarian aggression, and conventionalism (Altemeyer, 1988, p. 2). Although Altemeyer distances himself from his predecessors in the field by adopting a social-learning approach, he refers to authoritarian submissiveness on the one hand and to authoritarian dominance or aggression on the other hand as part of one and the same syndrome—just as Erich Fromm did five decades before him.

However, one of the differences between Fromm's approach and that of *The* Authoritarian Personality—and, obviously, Altemeyer's work—was that Fromm's terminology expressed an allegiance to a Marxist frame of thought, which can no longer be found in his own work and in that of the other members of the Frankfurt School during and after the Second World War. In my view, Fromm's somewhat pedestrian prewar Marxist bias was detrimental to his interpretive endeavors in the thirties. It led him to formulations which collapsed commitments to principles of economic equality and political democracy into one "radical" or "socialist" attitude. Thus, Fromm could claim, for instance, that left-wing workers who were "radical" in their attitude to authority figures and their relations to colleagues, "were in agreement in both thought and feeling with the Socialist line" (p. 228). This obfuscation of categories which do not necessarily coincide is characteristic of Fromm's discourse before the Second World War.

Moreover, Fromm's interpretive technique allowed him a wide range of discretion in evaluating responses, a fact which may seem problematic from the point of view of today's procedures used in opinion surveys (cf. Samelson, 1993, p. 33). Fromm assumed, for instance, that positive answers in the question of whether one's childhood was happy and whether one's parents' marriage was happy contained "more distortions of reality than . . . negative replies; for it is well known that people are more inclined to glorify their childhood than to see it in a bad light" (p. 198). Sixty percent of respondents thought both their own childhood and their parents' marriage were happy. But when one examined responses among National Socialists alone, there were 71% who thought so, while among left socialist and Communist officials figures were as low as 43% and 45% respectively. How did Fromm interpret these results? In his view this trend could

be explained in two ways: on the one hand, one may be dealing with a real tendency which is to say that people with an objectively unhappy childhood are often more inclined to adopt a radical political attitude. But it may be equally true that people who are more radical are also more inclined to be more critical; they therefore have fewer illusions about the past and the present and will see their childhood in a more realistic light. If we did not know that an unhappy childhood often results in a gentle, submissive and non-aggressive character, the first explanation would be altogether satisfactory; as it is, we have to assume that the trend itself indicates a constitutional relationship between a growing radicalism and a lack of illusions (p. 200).

Else Frenkel-Brunswick, who wrote the chapter on "Parents and Childhood as Seen Through the Interviews" in *The Authoritarian Personality*, also assumed that what she called a "conventional idealization of parents" was a sign of the authoritarian outlook, while low scorers (that is, more democratically inclined subjects) were said to exhibit a more "objective appraisal" of their parents. However, in contrast to Fromm, she also postulated that low scorers exhibited a "genuine positive affect" toward parents, which was said to be absent from the emotional life of authoritarians (Adorno et al., 1950, p. 339).

Moreover, while Frenkel-Brunswick traced authoritarianism to early childhood experiences of the subjects, Fromm refrained from doing so explicitly in the interpretation of the questionnaire, possibly because the data collected allowed no such causal assumptions. However, Fromm's other early writings leave no doubt that he held the adult character structure of people to be engendered by the authority structures of their families, their emotional climates and attitudes similarly to Frenkel-Brunswick in The Authoritarian Personality (cf. Adorno et al., 1950, pp. 384-389). Already in 1932 he had asserted: "The family is the medium through which society or the social class stamps its specific structure on the child, and hence on the adult. The family is the psychological agency of society" (Fromm, 1932, p. 145; original emphasis).

In contrast to the authors of *The Authoritarian Personality*, Fromm argued that Freud and the orthodox psychoanalyst following him failed to see how much the family itself was shaped by economic forces and how much its ideals and attitudes were class-based. From early on, for Fromm character was constituted by a set of internalized social practices which were imposed on individuals by the socioeconomic system via the family. Hence in his view children of a particular class or subclass were bound to acquire certain common character traits—which he called "social character"—which later in life made them want to act in a predisposed way, if the particular society into which they were born was to continue to function (Fromm, 1942 [1960], p. 242).

Moreover, in Man for Himself, Fromm explained that contrary to Freud, in his own work "the fundamental basis of character is not seen in various types of libido organization but in specific kinds of a person's relatedness to the world. In the process of living, man relates himself to the world (1) by acquiring and assimilating things, and (2) by relating himself to people (and himself)" (Fromm, 1949, p. 58). Thus, when he distinguished a number of character types from one another, the designations he used defined them in terms of economyrelated social practices—such as "receiving," "exploiting," "hoarding," "marketing," and "productive"—rather than in terms of bodily zones and sexual needs (Fromm, 1949, pp. 62-117). Finally, nowhere in Fromm's manuscript can one find references to respondents' sexual wishes or fears, or to early socialization processes which have to do with the satisfaction of oral, anal, or Oedipal desires.

Indeed, Fromm declared in later years that although his work was supposed to integrate Freud's psychology and Marx's social theory, this fusion was never intended to be a marriage of equals. Fromm accepted Marxist premises as given and tried to enrich them with psychoanalysis, which in his eyes could provide the Hence, while Fromm's interpretive approach was to some extent speculative—as are also, albeit in other ways, all evaluations of data collected in opinion surveys—all that he presupposed were general assumptions concerning the dialectics of unconscious mental processes, such as repression, rationalization and reaction-formation, and a generalized psychodynamic view of parent—child relationships, which nowadays have become part and parcel of all dynamic approaches in psychology. As Christel Hopf has shown in her recent survey of the relevant literature, contrary to Bob Altemeyer's criticism of psychodynamic approaches, such assumptions can still be used fruitfully in research into the origins of authoritarianism (Hopf, 1993, pp. 119–143; cf. Altemeyer, 1988, pp. 52–54).

ATTITUDES AND PRACTICES

On the whole, Fromm's evaluation generated a rich picture of workers and employees in Weimar Germany and endowed many of his interpretations with plausibility. It provides an intriguing alternative to the often somewhat "flat" construction and evaluation of opinion surveys which neglect to assess answers within the cultural and class context in which they are conducted and which they reflect. Indeed, his interpretive approach required Fromm to be well acquainted with the ideology, life style, cultural tastes, and habits of the social group to which respondents belonged, in order to distinguish individual idiosyncracies from generally established patterns and uncover hidden undercurrents in their attitudes and behavior. Such judgments are always precarious, and to some extent they always involve the evaluator's own prejudices. But there can be no doubt that Fromm did devote much effort and care to the reconstruction of the cultural climate and political debates of the time, in order to assess his respondents' answers.

For instance, he argued that when he evaluated the significance of responses in terms of the underlying character features, "the view that married women should not work was so widespread in Germany that this did not necessarily imply a desire to keep women in a subordinate position." Hence he regarded simple negative replies as neutral and only classified those which were accompanied by additional negative comments as pointing to authoritarian tendencies (pp. 216-217). Moreover, he pointed out that if 84% of respondents had a negative attitude toward women's use of fashion accessories, such as lipstick,

perfume, and silk stockings, this had much to do with the fact that their use was hotly debated in both in right wing and left wing circles as part of the argument around women's sexual liberation and social emancipation. Mass-produced women's accessories had reached Germany from the U.S. and become popular at the time but were considered immoral, un-German, or decadent by many (pp. 150–162).

Fromm's evaluations of the responses to the questionnaire appear under headings which characterize the questionnaire as being concerned with "attitudes" toward political issues, life, cultural and aesthetic standards, women, children, authority, and fellow human beings. However, only a minority of the questions actually elicited self-reports in which respondents declared their attitudes toward a variety of issues, such as the German judiciary, punishment for abortion, God, and sex education for children. The majority of items of the questionnaire focused on social practices of various kinds. On the one hand, respondents were asked about their own and their families' education, employment, debts, dwellings, and party affiliation. These questions can be taken to refer mainly to past and present formal social practices, which involve contractual agreements or which are conducted in the public realm. On the other hand, a large number of questions had to do with informal social practices, that is, they inquired whether respondents had pets, were active in sports, read scholarly books and went to public libraries, visited museums, played musical instruments, belonged to a theater society, went on weekend outings with friends and family, collected stamps, ate in cafes, at home, or in pubs.

Since no unequivocal reports or documentation is available concerning the original construction of the questionnaire, one cannot elaborate on the theoretical considerations which led to the emphasis on these types of questions. However, it is evident that this approach to political and cultural consciousness as primarily expressed in social practices is akin to a Hegelian-Marxist outlook rather than a Freudian one. For a large part of the questionnaire juxtaposes verbal attestations of party preferences and political opinions on the one hand with the symbolic content of social practices on the other. As we shall see below, in case of a conflict or contradiction between these two levels, Fromm attributed primacy to practices, since he took them as providing a measure of the underlying and ultimately decisive commitment to democratic values—of a political unconscious, as it were (cf. Benton, 1981, pp. 172-173; Gramsci, 1971, p. 327). Fromm explained: "If one looks at the position of the average citizen in presentday society, who usually has no economic power, his authoritarian tendencies are most likely to be acted out in his private life, in his relationship with his wife and children. Where an authoritarian attitude exists, it will show itself in the rejection of economic independence for the wife as well as in the belief that too little corporal punishment is bad for a child" (pp. 215-216).

Thus, Fromm applied to workers and employees in Weimar Germany what

Hegel wrote of the Greeks and Romans: "They neither learned nor taught, but evinced by their actions the moral maxims which they could call their very own" (cited in Avineri, 1972, p. 20; emphasis added). Charles Taylor explains that according to Hegel "a certain view of man in his relation to society is embedded in some of the practices and institutions of society. So that we can think of these as expressing certain ideas. And indeed, they may be the only, or the most adequate expression of these ideas, if the society has not developed a relatively articulate and accurate theory about itself" (Taylor, 1979, p. 89).

Moreover, the open-ended and unstructured questions of the survey not only prompted respondents to express themselves on their actualized self-expression, but also encouraged them to be active in answering the questionnaire. This aspect of the questionnaire contrasts starkly with the domineering discursive pattern characteristic of a great many opinion researches which were conducted in later years, on whose political presuppositions and implications John Dryzek has commented incisively and critically (Dryzek, 1990, pp. 160-168). As Dryzek points out, in general the discourse of opinion surveys treats individuals "as structured bundles of psychological attributes" (Dryzek, 1990, p. 160) and "has a subtle stake in perpetuating the reactive side of human behavior and suppressing the active aspect" (Dryzek, 1990, p. 167). In contrast to conventional approaches in opinion surveys, Dryzek advocates a methodology whose "instrument itself should involve a (classically) political encounter and action-related cogitation in its very application" (Dryzek, 1990, p. 175). It seems to me that by basing the research on open-ended questions, the Institute's research design went a long way toward meeting Dryzek's desideratum; in this fashion it suggested a method of empirical research whose premises and implications are more democratic than that of other, contemporary approaches.

AUTHORITARIAN PERSONALITY

As we have seen, Fromm's data interpretation had two aims: on the one hand he analyzed responses according to the political orientation, economic status, and age of respondents. In this way he created a comprehensive cultural and political profile of skilled workers and employees in Weimar Germany, which extends over some 120 pages of the book and correlates party affiliation and employment even with sleep disorders (pp. 202-203). On the other hand, Fromm chose 16 questions from the questionnaire which appeared to be particularly indicative of the respondents' (a) political opinions, (b) attitudes toward authority figures, and (c) behavior toward others. By weighing the various answers differentially and excluding respondents whose answers exhibited contradictory positions within one of the three categories, Fromm evaluated 474 questionnaires—that is, 81% of the sample—according to whether the values

Table I

- (a) Political Opinion
- 1. How, in your opinion, can the world be improved?
- 2. Who do you think were the greatest personalities in history? In the present?
- 3. How, in your opinion, can a new world war be prevented?
- 4. Who, in your opinion, is responsible for the inflation?
- (b) Attitudes to Authority
- 5. Do you think it right that married women should go out to work?
- 6. Why (not)?
- 7. Do you think one can bring up children entirely without corporal punishment?
- 8. Reasons for answer in question 7.
- 9. Do you think that the individual is responsible for his own fate?
- 10. Why (not)?
- 11. How, in your opinion, could the world be improved?
- (c) Attitudes toward Fellow Human Beings
- 12. What is your relationship with your colleagues at work?
- 13. With your immediate superiors?
- 14. With those above them?
- 15. Do you lend money or objects to friends?
- 16. Why/Why not?

which their answers expressed were "radical" (R), "authoritarian" (A), "compromiseoriented" (C), or unclear; this last category was termed "neutral" (N). For instance, he defined those whose self-reports described their relationships with colleagues as better than their relationships with superiors as "radical," while he categorized those with the opposite pattern as "authoritarian." Other answers were seen as indicating a "compromise-oriented" or "neutral" orientation. Similarly, he argued that those who lent money and expressed their solidarity with friends and colleagues had a "radical" outlook, while those who supported their refusal to lend money with moral-ideological comments were considered "authoritarian." A conditional readiness to lend money was thought to manifest a "compromise-oriented" attitude, while other answers were seen as "neutral" (p. 221).

Interpreting answers to the three categories (politics, authority figures, selfother relations) as interrelated, that is, as expressing parts of a comprehensive personality structure—which could exhibit contradictions across categories— Fromm then classified respondents into a number of basic psychopolitical types. As always, his terminology was political rather than psychoanalytic: at one end of the spectrum he placed reliable anti-Nazis. Members of this group ranked as "radical" at least on one level in addition to their political opinions—that is, either in their attitudes to authority figures or their characterization of their selfother relations—with no contradictory tendencies on the third level. At the other end Fromm placed respondents who ranked "authoritarian" in their political views and on an additional level—even though they voted for a left wing partyhate and anger against everyone who had money and appeared to enjoy life. That part of the socialist platform which aimed at the overthrow of the propertied classes strongly appealed to them. On the other hand, items such as freedom and equality had not the slightest attraction for them, since they willingly obeyed every powerful authority they admired; they liked to control others, in so far as they had the power to do so. (P. 43)

Between these two groups Fromm placed those whose declared politics was socialist or communist, but who exhibited no underlying democratic commitment. Some of these respondents seemed to reject authority only where it became too strict but did not oppose it as a matter of principle. In Fromm's terms, their underlying attitude was "compromise-oriented." Another subgroup was composed of those whose views were socialist or communist in political matters, but who were authoritarian in relation to authority or other people. Finally, there were those who seemed to have no underlying commitment to anything, or who answered in a nondescript or neutral fashion on questions which did not refer to politics.

According to this classification, 20% of the voters and supporters of the Socialist and Communist parties in Weimar Germany turned out to be authoritarian. Forty percent gave answers which indicated that they were indifferent, neutral, or compromise-oriented in relation to political issues, even though they voted for the Social Democratic or Communist party. Twenty-five percent of left-wingers were politically engaged and their answers reflected the Communist or Socialist party platform; but they had no deeper commitment to democratic values. According to Fromm this group could have been led to oppose Nazism "if a capable leadership and correct evaluation of the political situation had been at hand." However, Fromm argued that only 15% of workers in Weimar Germany who identified themselves with the Social Democratic or Communist Party were both emotionally invested in politics and had a democratic commitment. Only they could have been assumed to manifest "in critical times the courage, readiness for sacrifice and spontaneity needed to rouse the less active and to overcome the enemy" (p. 228; see Table II).

In the historical context of 1937–1938, in which Fromm interpreted the data gathered in 1929–1931, it had already become obvious that a superficial acceptance of left-wing ideology and absence of authoritarianism—which characterized 65% of his respondents—were insufficient to resist Nazism. As Fromm declared in an italicized passage in *The Fear of Freedom* (or *The Escape from Freedom*, under the later American title) a book which he published only a few years after he had written his manuscript on employees and skilled workers in Weimar Germany: "ideas can become powerful forces, but only to the extent to which they are answers to specific human needs prominent in a given social character." He explained:

Ideas often are consciously accepted by certain groups, which, on account of the pecu-

liarities of their social character, are not really touched by them; such ideas remain a stock of conscious convictions, but people fail to act according to them in a critical hour. An example of this is shown in the German labor movement at the time of the victory of Nazism. (Fromm, 1942 [1960], pp. 241-242)

What would have been needed, according to Fromm, was a left-wing conviction which would have had weight in the respondents' lives, a commitment to democracy, and a willingness to fight for it—and these he found only in a negligible minority of the Germany left.

As we see, Fromm assumed that the lack of democratic commitment among German workers had practical consequences for the direction of governmental policy. In my view, such an assumption was justified, for where government can resort to undemocratic practices without having to fear opposition, there is a great temptation to do so. As more recent empirical research confirms, it is indeed credible to assume, as Fromm did, that although personality structures of citizens have no direct effect on the formulation of policies, they fulfill an important practical function by setting limits to such policies and provide a context within which governmental policies are executed (cf. Gibson, 1992; Page & Shapiro, 1983).

DEMOCRATIC PERSONALITY

What, then, were the attributes which Fromm held to be typical for the committed democrat who can place limits on nondemocratic policymaking? Besides respect for others and solidarity with them, Fromm stressed above all the democratic personality's capacity for autonomy. Thus, he continuously identified the democratic personality with what he called the "revolutionary character," who, in Fromm's words, "is capable of saying 'No'. Or, to put it differently, the revolutionary character is a person capable of disobedience. He is someone for whom disobedience can be a virtue" (Fromm, 1963, p. 161).

Prima facie, such a depiction of democratic commitment, which focuses on autonomy and seeks its expression primarily in resistance and disobedience, may seem strange. Indeed, one may be tempted to explain it by the historical circumstances of Fromm's data evaluation. However, there are significant parallels

Table II

RRR RR-	R—	RCC RC-	RNN RN-	RAA RA-	Α	AAA AA-
15%	25%	5%	16%	19%	15%	5%
15% Nazis	65% Superficial left-wingers				20% Hidden Nazis	

between Fromm's position and that of celebrated and influential postwar scholars who concern themselves with morality and democracy from a philosophical or psychological point of view. For instance, Lawrence Kohlberg has made it explicit that what he considers the highest stage of moral reasoning may lead to the violation of conventional laws or rules, if these contradict universal principles and rights (Colby & Kohlberg, 1987, p. 19). Ronald Dworkin argues that civil violations of rules are morally justified as experiments leading to overdue corrections and innovations, without which a vital republic cannot retain its legitimacy. Paradoxically, according to Dworkin a democratic society should recognize, and possibly educate to, civil disobedience (Dworkin, 1977, pp. 184-222). Jürgen Habermas has defined civil disobedience as a "litmus test for the appropriate understanding of the moral foundations of democracy" (Habermas, 1985, p. 101), and in A Theory of Justice John Rawls, too, has come out in defense of civil disobedience (Rawls, 1970, pp. 363-391).

While these scholars are in agreement with Erich Fromm in recognizing resistance and disobedience generated by democratic commitment as crucial elements in the definition of democratic behavior and character, empirical research in political psychology has given Fromm's emphasis only little serious consideration. Other than deploying the Kohlberg scale in order to measure and re-measure moral reasoning which guides radical political groups, political psychologists seem largely uninterested in inquiring into the ability and willingness to resist undemocratic authority for the sake of democracy (e.g., Candee & Kohlberg, 1987; Fishkin, Keniston & MacKinnon, 1973; Haan, 1975; Haan, Smith & Block, 1968).

In general, the concept of the democratic personality has remained rather underdeveloped in the empirical literature, and often it has been defined indirectly and negatively, by a low ranking on scales developed for pathological, antidemocratic trends, such as in the F Scale of The Authoritarian Personality and Bob Altemeyer's RWA (Right-wing authoritarianism) Scale (Altemeyer, 1988, p. 262). Moreover, democratic commitment is often represented as synonymous with mental health. In his introductory article to The Authoritarian Personality, Theodor Adorno, for instance, described it as part of "the rational system of an objective and thoughtful man" and referred to the democrat as "a mature personality" (Adorno et al., 1950, p. 11).

Harold Lasswell, who provided a more detailed description of the democratic personality than most, characterized it as equipped with a capacity to invite and form genuine personal relationships; a disposition to share and to incorporate many values rather than few; an attitude toward others as well-intentioned, able, honest, friendly, and worthy of trust; and an integrated personality, where unconscious elements are not at odds with conscious ones (Lasswell, 1951, pp. 494– 495, 502-514).

Of course, there is more at stake here than simply a question of definition.

As Quentin Skinner has rightly argued, in our society the use of the epithet "democratic" never only serves "to describe a state of affairs, but also (and eo ipso) to perform the speech-act of commending it" (Skinner, 1973, p. 298). Obviously, Fromm's definition of democratic commitment—and his identification of it with a "radical" or "revolutionary" character—is as value-laden as those given by others, but by no means more so. Moreover, in contrast to descriptivevaluative definitions which have been posited by Lasswell and the Berkeley group, Fromm's characterization stays on the surface and does not demand assent to unobservable categories. For as we have seen, rather than defining the democratic personality by fragmenting it into hypothetical and inaccessible subpersonal categories—for instance, into the Freudian psychic agencies "id," "ego," and "superego" used in the explanatory framework of the Berkeley group—Fromm distinguished democrats from authoritarians by contextualizing political behavior and consciousness within other social practices.

PERSONALITY AND POLITICS

Finally, one may wonder whether there is at all a point in investigating democratic commitment and the inclination or readiness to take part in principled political actions in the defence of democracy. Since the 1930s empirical research has repeatedly and consistently revealed a significant gap between responses in questionnaires and interviews, and factors which become operative in actions and practices taking place in concrete situations (cf. Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975; 1980; DeFleur & Westie, 1958; Gree, 1954; LaPiere, 1934; Linn, 1964; McNemar, 1946; Wicker, 1969; Kutner, Wilkins & Yarrow, 1952). Moreover, students of political psychology tend to agree that most people are guided in their political opinions and behavior by thinking which lacks abstraction and universalization (McClosky, 1964; Prothro & Grigg, 1960; Sarat, 1975). Icek Aizen. for instance, concludes a review of the relevant literature by saying that there is little relation between global personality traits on the one hand and specific actions on the other, and that "the search for explanations of narrowly defined behavior in terms of global personality traits has, as a general rule, turned out to be a frustrating experience . . . , and many an investigator has given up in despair" (Ajzen, 1988, p. 39).

Fromm's interpretative endeavors prove that those wishing to look into the hearts of the workers—and of all other citizens, for that matter—have no reason to sink into despair. As we have seen, he did not assume that the various practices and elements of a person were necessarily consistent with one another. On the contrary, he interpreted the way in which explicit political commitments and day-to-day practices in various domains could be (a) congruent and mutually reinforcing, (b) dissonant and contradictory, or (c) basically unrelated to one another. Since Fromm did not attempt to derive character features from single instances of behavior or expressions of attitudes toward one or the other object, he avoided the methodological pitfalls which have been criticized in the contemporary literature. Even Ajzen agrees that by aggregating self-reports on actions in different contexts, it is possible to draw conclusions concerning personality structure. Ajzen asserts that since aggregative research can isolate the influence of factors consistently present across different disparate contexts, it can infer broad dispositions from equally broad sets of response tendencies and is capable of revealing a character-rooted disposition to perform a particular behavior (Ajzen, 1988, pp. 47–48, 52–53).

Indeed, much is to be said in defense of an aggregative interpretive approach such as Fromm's, which contextualizes self-reports on political behavior with self-reports on other social practices. First, as Fromm stated explicitly, day-to-day practices reveal a person's subjective political norms, precisely because in the private domain there are no strict established conventions concerning justice and the egalitarian distribution of power (p. 46).

Moreover, I would argue that unconventional behavior in the political sphere, such as principled disobedience, requires a sense of competence, effectiveness, and skill, which can only be acquired and developed in practices in the private realm, which therefore can provide clues to future political conduct. Though Fromm did not formulate such a defense for his approach, it clearly can be found in the contemporary literature (cf. Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975, 1980; Liska, 1984).

Finally, unpopular social choices, such as the decision to disobey, inevitably involve a price or trade-off. Thus, in my view a person will be reluctant to give up democratic principles for other values only if he or she is emotionally invested in democratic practices and is used to their actualization at home. Hence I would be inclined to justify Fromm's assertions also by arguing that private realms of social practice are necessary moments in the formation of the democratic personality; that is, that they constitute stages in a person's apprenticeship toward democratic citizenship, which one day may require principled disobedience. The importance of learning democracy in the private realm for conduct in the public realm is a key principle in all participatory models of democracy, such as have been advocated by political theorists from Jean-Jacques Rousseau to Carole Pateman (Pateman, 1970).

Indeed, the assumption that, like charity, democracy starts at home, is hardly a new one. In making this assumption its implicit presupposition, Fromm's interpretation took up an intuition on the interrelation between personality, family, and political behavior which form part of political discourse for several centuries. For instance, this assumption already guided Charles Lesley in 1703 in the writing of a pamphlet in which he expressed his doubts about those

who proclaimed their democratic commitment too loudly in the aftermath of the Glorious Revolution. As he put it:

If they Believ'd Themselves, or their own pretences, they wo'd go Home, and call a Council for their Wives, Children and Servants, and tell them that the Master of a Family was ordain'd for the Good of those that were put under his Government, that it was not to be Suppos'd such a Number of persons, equal to him self in Nature were all Created merely for his Lusts and Pleasures; and that they must be the best Judges of what for their own Good; and therefore, that they shou'd Meet and Consult together, as oft as they thought fit; and set him Rules for the Government of his Family. . . . can any Believe that a Tyrant in a Family would not prove the same upon a Throne? It has ever prov'd so. And I desire no other Test for these Publick Patrons for Liberty, than to look into their Conversation and their Families. (Cited in Dunn, 1969, p. 73)

CONCLUSIONS

Let us take stock then: there are a number of unresolved questions concerning the authorship of the questionnaire and the intention underlying the opinion survey which the Frankfurt Institute of Social Research undertook in 1929–1931. In fact, it may be that its original conception was not that of a research into authoritarian and democratic tendencies and practices of German workers. Thus, its presentation as a psychological and sociological study of the working class in Weimar Germany—as which the English title of its 1984 publication announces it—refers to the intention guiding the interpretation of the data, but not necessarily to the purpose of its collection. Moreover, there is an ideological bias underlying Fromm's evaluation of the questionnaire, which vitiated some of his formulations.

But rather than focusing on such shortcomings and dismissing the opinion survey as dated, I have suggested that there are a number of strong reasons for a positive assessment of Fromm's manuscript, which he wrote in 1937–1938: it (a) demonstrates how the interpretation of opinion surveys can be inspired by psychoanalytic technique without adopting unsubstantiated assumptions about invisible entities; (b) proposes a reasonable way of assessing the depth of democratic commitment; (c) advances a nonreductionist hypothesis concerning the interrelation of personality and politics; (d) takes into account internal contradictions in political attitudes and behavior; (e) relates to respondents as active subjects embedded in a network of social relations rather than as atomistic, structured bundles of attitudes, attributes, and opinions; and (f) puts to use intuitions about the sources and nature of democratic commitment which are part of past and present democratic theory.

Hence, I conclude that Fromm's manuscript from 1937–1938 is not only of value from a historical point of view, but also constitutes a provocative example of data analysis which can still provide food for thought for today's students of political psychology. After all, as Bob Altemeyer has pointed out not too long

Brunner

ago, "all the problems in our culture associated with the authoritarian personality have remained, and in many respects they have grown" (Altemeyer, 1988, p. xviii).

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Looking into the Hearts of the Workers

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Drawing on theory and research from linguistics, cognitive psychology, and foreign policy analysis, this essay begins to explore the possible role metaphors (in comparison with historical analogies) might play in foreign policy decision making. The case is made that there is every reason to expect metaphors to play an important role in shaping a decision maker's analysis, thus influencing his/her policy choices. The role played by metaphors is, however, likely to be very different than is the case for historical analogies because of the key differences between metaphors and analogies. These points are illustrated by looking at the role of the Munich analogy in comparison to the domino metaphor used by U.S. decision makers during the Cold War.

KEY WORDS: metaphors; analogies; schema; foreign policy

INTRODUCTION

No area of human interaction is free of metaphorical thinking and language. In international relations and foreign policy, metaphors are used by scholars and policymakers alike. One of the more common metaphors is the notion that war is a "disease" that needs to be "eradicated" (Alcock, 1972). Francis Beer, for example, develops this metaphor at length in his discussion of the "epidemiology of war and peace," and others speak of the process of war "contagion" in much the same way that we speak of the common cold or flu (Beer, 1979, emphasis added; Siverson & Starr, 1991). Similarly, international relations is frequently referred to as a "game" nations play, either using the term loosely (Spanier, 1978) or more rigorously as in game-theoretical approaches. Russett and Starr (1989) suggest that the metaphor of the "menu" is useful for understanding the "choices" nations make. The whole notion of the state of nature as a basis for understanding the roots of international conflict is also metaphorical, while Garrett Hardin (1977) identifies two alternative metaphors which have been advanced for fram-

655