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AN INTRODUCTION TO PERSONALIZED PERSUASION

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If you wanted to persuade someone to change their attitude, belief, or behavior, how would you do it? Arguably, the answer to this question is one of the most important in all the behavioral sciences. It is at the core of helping people improve themselves, maintaining platonic and romantic relationships, determining people's electoral choices, and more. But the single greatest universal persuasion strategy awaits discovery. Still, of the millennia of thinkers who have philosophized or empirically tested how to influence people's minds, one solution has consistently emerged: *personalizing* one's communication to the target of influence. Before providing a more detailed discussion of "personalized persuasion," it is useful to briefly note that it is the idea of matching or aligning one or more aspects of an influence attempt (the message, the source, the context) to one or more aspects of the intended recipient (e.g., the person's political views, gender). The present handbook offers a state-of-the-art review of how best to utilize this persuasive approach and describes the domains in which its robust influence has already been observed.

New Attention to Personalized Persuasion

Although communicators have long acknowledged the potential of personalizing their persuasion strategies (as we will review), the digital age has brought new academic and public attention to these possibilities. Perhaps the most high-profile case of personalized messaging concerns the British company Cambridge Analytica, which made headlines in 2018 as news came out that it had harvested personal data from an estimated 87 million Facebook users, which they then used to design political messages personalized to users'

unique personality profiles with the goal of influencing election outcomes (Kang & Frenkel, 2018; Rosenberg et al., 2018). Although much of the attention on Cambridge Analytica centered on people's sense that it was wrong for the company to access people's personal data without consent, the basic premise that organizations can now access and use people's data to efficiently craft and deploy personalized messages is not unique to them. Scholars and practitioners have increasingly observed the effectiveness of and advocated for personalized communication strategies in behavioral health interventions (Bucher, 2023), public policy nudges (Mills, 2022), and more. In short, these new communication tools have helped push the practice of personalization into public awareness, raising questions on how companies gather and then use people's data to personalize messages and what effects doing so has. And with technologies growing more sophisticated, advancements like artificial intelligence (AI) offer further possibilities for "hyper-personalized communications." As one of the largest management consultancies, McKinsey and Company, put it: "personalization will transform the way companies approach marketing" ("What Is Personalization?" 2023).

Public opinion regarding the use of personalized messaging is mixed. People seem to appreciate the value of personalization in principle but have privacy concerns about how communicators learn or access the personal information used in the process (Kozyreva et al., 2021). People's comfort with targeted messages, especially online, also varies by context. For example, although people are generally uncomfortable with personalized messaging, they tend to be more open to it in commercial advertising than in political communication (Ipsos MORI, 2020; Kozyreva et al., 2021; McCarthy, 2020; Smith, 2018; cf. Baum et al., 2023). Thus, aside from concerns over unapproved access and subsequent use of their data, people worry about how these personalized messages online might influence their attitudes and behaviors in undue or undesired ways. But do contemporary personalization methods really work?

Recent research has used a variety of novel methods to get a general sense of how effective personalized persuasion is. For example, Tappin et al. (2023) applied machine learning methods to data from large pre-testing surveys in order to determine which messages about a range of issues were most persuasive to different segments of their sample (e.g., which message was most persuasive to 43-year-old Republicans?). Then, in a controlled survey experiment, participants saw either a randomly selected message, the message that performed best overall in the pretest, or the message that performed best for their demographic group (i.e., personalized). They found reliable evidence that the personalized message strategy was the most persuasive. Other work has used agent-based models to simulate elections under a variety of conditions, finding that campaigns that specifically target voters who are likely to be receptive to their message on an issue are more successful than campaigns

that disseminate messages randomly (Pilditch & Madsen, 2021). Finally, an emerging body of work uses AI technology to automatically generate personalized content for different groups (Matz et al., 2024; Simchon et al., 2024), all showing that personalized messaging can yield significant persuasive advantages. Some research has challenged the value of AI-generated personalized messages in the online context (Hackenburg & Margetts, 2024), but it is not clear that personalization was achieved in this work.

Although new technology has made personalized content more feasible (even alarmingly so), the notion that messages will be more influential when they align with their audience is far from new. Social scientists have recognized the importance of considering the alignment between a persuasion attempt and its audience long before the digital era. Yet, much of the modern as well as classic research on such personalized persuasion has taken an atheoretical or data-driven approach to identifying and testing the effectiveness of personalized content. Thus, given its increasing prevalence and influence at this critical time, the present volume gathers the broad body of research from the social sciences on personalized persuasion to establish the state of the science. By juxtaposing streams of research that have generally developed independently of one another, this volume provides new opportunities to highlight common themes, exposes open questions, and provides a more comprehensive playbook for incorporating insights about personalization in practical communication campaigns.

Key Concepts in Personalized Persuasion

Matching Among the Factors of Communication

Any instance of persuasive communication comprises several key elements (Lasswell, 1948; McGuire, 1969). First is the *message*, which refers to various aspects of the content of the persuasive communication. Messages are characterized by the topic they cover (e.g., on vaccines or climate change), the position they take on the topic (e.g., for or against vaccines), the nature of the information provided (e.g., using rational or emotional arguments), and the form and structure in which the content is communicated (e.g., presenting one side of the issue or both sides). Second, there is the *source*, which refers to the person or institution who is communicating the message. Sources are classically defined by their credibility, attractiveness, and power (Kelman, 1961), and these dimensions can be further broken down (Hovland et al., 1953; Wallace et al., 2020). These characteristics are conceptual secondary features that stem from inferences regarding the primary features of a source. For instance, sources can be objectively defined by their age or prior experience, which gives rise to inferences about their relevant credibility. It is these primary features that will tend to be most relevant in this volume, which can

include the source's demographic identities, political affiliation, and occupation. Third is the *context*, which is the setting or environment in which the communication takes place. This can include the medium through which the message is conveyed, the location in which the message is delivered, or even temporal elements (e.g., the weather). Finally, is the *recipient*, or the person who receives the communication. Recipients bring a host of attributes with them when they encounter a persuasive message, including their attitudes and beliefs, personal identities, goals, personality, and more.

Together, we refer to the set of these elements as the "factors of communication." This framework is useful because it applies to many relevant domains. For example, in political communication, a political candidate (source) could articulate their policy positions (message) during a televised debate (context) presented to an audience of supporters (recipient). Alternatively, in commercial advertising, a company (source) could describe a product's features (message) in a sponsored social media post (context) that is displayed to a subset of users (recipient). In principle, much research has shown that the outcome of any persuasive communication can depend independently on each of these factors. For example, in some circumstances, an audience might agree with an appeal because the arguments in its message are compelling, irrespective of who the source is. Alternatively, in other circumstances, the audience might agree with the appeal because of the attractiveness of the source alone, irrespective of the arguments' strength (cf., Petty & Cacioppo, 1986).

A substantial body of research, however, has considered how the unique *combination* of communication variables can affect persuasion outcomes. When two communication variables are congruent with one another within a communication event, the persuasive implications are often referred to as "matching" effects (Edwards, 1990; Lavine & Snyder, 1996; Petty & Wegener, 1998). "Matches" can occur *within* a factor of communication, such as when two source characteristics are aligned (e.g., using a source that is both expert and trustworthy since both enhance credibility; Ziegler et al., 2002). Perhaps more often, researchers have studied matches *between* factors of communication. For instance, the characteristics of a message (e.g., the confidence conveyed by its language) can match the characteristics of the source (e.g., their social status; Loyd et al., 2010). In principle, persuasion could depend on the congruence between any two features of the communication dynamic; however, the present book will focus on a specific yet prominent type of match.

Defining Personalized Persuasion

In light of rapidly developing technologies that offer communicators unprecedented access to people's (i.e., potential message recipients') personal opinions, beliefs, and behavior, this book focuses on a matching effect we

refer to as "personalized" matching. This is not to say that other types of matching are not important, but personalized matching is exploding in its current use. This type of matching considers the persuasive implications of how well a *recipient* characteristic matches some aspect(s) of the message, source, or context. For example, personalized persuasion comprises instances where characteristics of the *message* are congruent with characteristics of the recipient, as is the case when a message evokes emotion and the audience has an emotional orientation (Aquino et al., Chapter 3, this volume), or when a message presents moral arguments and the recipient holds moralized attitudes on the topic (Luttrell, Chapter 6, this volume). This would also be true when characteristics of the *source* are congruent with the recipient, as when the communicator's social identity (Fleming, Chapter 7; Pietri et al., Chapter 14, this volume) or political affiliation (Druckman, Chapter 11, this volume) matches the recipient's identity.

Notably, we (and the chapter authors) take a broad perspective on what it means for the factors of communication to "match" something about the recipient. In essence, any form of conceptual congruence constitutes a match. As an example, Chapter 3 provides a variety of ways in which affective versus cognitive messaging strategies can match the recipient: the message can align with the actual basis of the recipient's existing attitude (i.e., whether the attitude is grounded more in emotion or cognition), with the recipient's perception of their attitude basis (i.e., whether they perceive their attitude as being based more on feelings or beliefs, regardless of the reality), or even with their dispositional nature to rely on affective experiences versus cognitive reasoning in general. In each case, the affective or cognitive content of the message is *directly* relevant or personalized to (i.e., "matches") a feature of the recipient. This personalization can also emerge more *indirectly*. For example, because people from East Asian cultures tend to hold more collectivistic (vs. individualistic) values on average, an advertisement emphasizing the collectivistic (rather than individualistic) benefits of a product better matches an East Asian (vs. Western) recipient via that recipient's presumed values (Shavitt, Chapter 8, this volume). Similarly, because politically conservative people tend to prioritize the values of purity and sanctity in their moral convictions, a message emphasizing how a policy upholds purity values is more personalized to a conservative (vs. liberal) recipient via that person's presumed moral priorities (Luttrell, Chapter 6, this volume).

The way in which a communication matches the recipient can also vary in *salience*, with some matches being quite blatant (e.g., openly referring to the matched characteristic) and others more subtle (e.g., using imagery that cues the matched characteristic). Furthermore, the characteristic on which a recipient matches some factor of communication can vary in its *breadth* and *generalizability*. First, some characteristics are quite broad in that they constitute conceptually superordinate values or traits that subsume narrower

characteristics. For instance, a communicator may wish to personalize their message to a recipient's interest in making morally informed judgments in general or to a recipient's interest in using a particular moral value as their behavioral compass, which would constitute more broad or narrow dimensions of matching, respectively (Luttrell, Chapter 6, this volume). Similarly, a source could match the recipient on a broad social identity (e.g., their gender) or a narrower, intersectional identity (e.g., their unique combination of gender, race, and age; Pietri et al., Chapter 14, this volume). Second, independent of its breadth, a potential matching characteristic can also vary in its generalizability to a particular communication, that is, the context-dependency of the recipients' endorsement of the focal value or trait. For instance, although one would typically consider a moral appeal to match a recipient's moral orientation, perhaps one recipient only applies their moral orientation to political (but not consumer) issues (i.e., lower generalizability), whereas another person applies their moral orientation to both domains (i.e., higher generalizability). As we revisit in the concluding chapter, these qualities of a match—directness, salience, breadth, and generalizability—have been understudied as potential moderators of personalization's influence.

"Personalized persuasion" has gone by many names over the years. In addition to "matching," the basic idea of personalization (i.e., recipient-matched persuasion) has used the terms: "tailoring," "targeting," "microtargeting," "audience segmentation," and "adaptation," to name a few. Of course, authors can have slightly different notions in mind when they use one term or another (e.g., whether they are matching to an individual or an individual's group), but we generally do not distinguish between them as they are all concerned with the same interest (i.e., what happens when a feature of a recipient is congruent with another communication factor). One distinction is notable, however. Although "targeting" can be used in the way we have defined personalized persuasion (e.g., showing an advertisement featuring images of a social event to more extraverted social media users), it has also been used prominently to refer to another communication strategy: selecting particular recipients because they are a desirable target in and of themselves. For instance, political campaigns might selectively target very general mail flyers to people who are eligible to vote simply because their attitudes are the only ones directly capable of affecting election outcomes. Notably, there is nothing special about the flyer that matches these recipients. Although this form of targeted messaging is important, this book only considers targeting in the way we have defined personalized persuasion: matching the message, source, or context to a feature present in the targeted recipient, often representing a psychological variable. Nonetheless, even if some scholars have drawn a clear distinction between "targeted" and personalized persuasion, the differences may often be minor in practice. For instance, even if a political ad was targeted to likely voters purely for practical reasons, the ad might also resonate

particularly well with those recipients and engage more attention in them than it would if given to a group of unlikely voters because of their greater interest in politics.

What It Would Mean for Personalization to Be "Effective"

Although scholars and laypeople alike have long intuited that personalizing one's persuasion attempt is an effective influence strategy, empirically establishing the efficacy of a personalized appeal requires an important methodological consideration, namely, identifying an appropriate comparison. Comparing responses following a personalized message to a condition that either delivers no message or an irrelevant message that is not on the same topic is not sufficient for testing the positive impact of personalization because it confounds the use of recipient-matched features with the presence of any relevant messaging about the focal topic. For instance, if people who receive a product advertisement are more willing to buy the product than people who received no advertisement at all, it is unclear whether the personalization itself or simply the presentation of information about the product is responsible for the boost in intentions.

Instead, studies of personalized persuasion should (and typically do) include a comparison condition in which participants receive a topic-relevant message *without* features that are congruent with the recipient. Notably, this can occur in two distinct ways. One form would be a topic-relevant message that *omits* features that are congruent with the recipient. For instance, a message could be presented such that the source is identified as belonging to the recipient's social identity group or is not identified at all. In this case, the non-identified source does not match the recipient because it offers no personal alignment. This constitutes a "non-match" or "non-personalized" communication (or "passive mismatch;" see Joyal-Desmarais et al., Chapter 2, this volume). An alternative form of comparison could present a topic-relevant message with features that run *counter* to the recipient's characteristics. For example, a message from an in-group source could be compared to the same message from an out-group source. In this case, the comparison condition (out-group source) contains features that directly oppose the recipient characteristic, which is commonly referred to as a "mismatch." This could also be referred to as a "counter-match" or "reverse-match" (or "active mismatch;" Joyal-Desmarais et al., Chapter 2, this volume). Although both non-matches and mismatches offer legitimate comparisons to matched messages, mismatches specifically might prompt a unique psychological response (e.g., active resistance) relative to non-matches.

Across research on personalized persuasion, both types of comparison conditions have been used, but the majority have employed counter- or reverse-matched (mismatched) communications as the control rather than

non-matches. Although the benefits of matched communications have been shown over non-matches (indicating that matched communications can increase persuasion), the direction and size of the effect are more difficult to determine when compared against mismatches. That is, if matched and mismatched conditions are the only two available, one cannot determine if the difference between groups is mostly due to the match increasing persuasion or the mismatch decreasing it, whereas a non-match allows for understanding the direction of the effect. The most complete experimental design would, therefore, include matched, mismatched, and non-matched conditions.

In addition to selecting an appropriate comparison condition, another important consideration in determining the effectiveness of matched messages is the outcome they ostensibly affect. This book focuses primarily on the persuasion outcome of changing people's attitudes toward the topic of advocacy but also their corresponding beliefs, intentions, and/or behaviors. Although there could be interest in other outcomes, such as memory for a message's claims or attitudes toward the message's source, the chapters to follow focus primarily on the persuasive effect of the specific advocacy. On this outcome, research generally shows that personally matched (vs. mismatched or non-matched) appeals tend to enhance persuasion (e.g., produce increased support for an advocated policy or enhanced likelihood to purchase an advertised product). However, it is worth noting that matching (personalization) can sometimes have the opposite persuasive effect, pushing people away from the advocated position. Notably, these "personalization backfire effects" are rather sparse and mostly theoretically unconnected in the literature. So, rather than present a list of such findings across this vast body of research, we emphasize the importance of understanding mechanisms in theory and application. Each chapter not only summarizes what happens when a particular communication factor aligns with a recipient but also provides some discussion of *why* those effects are believed to occur. Doing so helps impose more clarity as to when one should expect personalization to enhance persuasion outcomes, backfire, or have no impact at all.

By "mechanisms" of personalized persuasion, we mean the psychological processes that translate a set of inputs into the resultant effect. In other words, what thoughts or feelings are sparked by the degree to which an appeal speaks to something about the recipient, and why would those reactions result in more positive or negative attitudes, intentions, or behaviors? There is currently no uniform conceptualization as to why personalization works. Thus, the chapters in this volume consider a wide variety of mechanisms ranging from single-process approaches (e.g., personalization increases the fluency of the message, and this ease of processing enhances liking) to multiprocess approaches that hold that the impact of personalization works by different mechanisms depending on the motivation and ability of recipients to think about the persuasive communication (see Briñol & Petty, Chapter 18, this volume).

The Origin of Personalized Persuasion

Personalized persuasion—although not historically labeled as such—has been a pillar of communication strategy in Western thinking and research as far back as the Greek philosopher Aristotle (380-320 BCE). In his famous tome, *Rhetoric*, Aristotle outlined some of the earliest perspectives on persuasion, noting that the best form of rhetoric modified its appeal to what was relevant to the listener (Aristotle, 1926, 3.14). Later, the Roman educator Marcus Quintilianus (35–100 CE) wrote in his authoritative tome on rhetoric that an orator must consider "to whom, and in whose presence, he is going to speak, for it is more allowable to say or do some things than others in addressing certain persons, or before certain audiences" (Quintilian, 2006, 11.3.150). More modern thinkers, like the 18th-century philosopher George Campbell, similarly codified this notion of personalization, writing of "the special character of the audience" and how the speaker should "suit himself to them, both in his style and his arguments" (Campbell, 2013, p. 240). These are only a few examples, though, of a plethora of thinkers, writers, and scientists over millennia who recognized the persuasive advantage of personalizing one's appeal.

Although these and other thinkers largely advocated for personalized persuasion based on their intuition and personal experience, these same ideas also began appearing in the formal science of psychology in the early 20th century. Notably, early on, attitudes (a common influence target) were conceived as a reflection of one's values (Allport, 1935; Woodruff & Divesta, 1948). That is, people were thought to develop positive or negative evaluations of objects based on those objects' association with the values the person held (e.g., family, health). As a result, early persuasion research found that people were more likely to change their attitudes when a message provided arguments that were most closely related to the values at the heart of the recipient's attitude (Carlson, 1956; Cartwright, 1949; Katz et al., 1956; M.J. Rosenberg, 1953; Sarnoff & Katz, 1954; M.B. Smith, 1949). However, among these early voices was a perspective that challenged the dominant influence of value-based rhetoric. In his "functional" approach to understanding attitudes, Daniel Katz (1960) posited that attitudes can serve various functions. Some attitudes indeed serve to express a person's core values, but other attitudes primarily serve utilitarian, ego-defensive, or social needs. As a result, Katz surmised that "attitude change must be understood in terms of the needs [attitudes] serve and that, as these motivational processes differ, so too will the conditions and techniques for attitude change" (p. 167; see Joyal-Desmarais et al., Chapter 2, this volume, for more detail on how this theoretical framework has influenced subsequent work on personalized persuasion).

Another harbinger of research on personalized persuasion comes from social psychological work on personality, where Hovland and Janis (1959)

conducted some of the first research examining individual differences in susceptibility to persuasion. They were expressly interested in "general persuasibility," or a "communication-free" tendency to be persuaded "independently of the subject matter or appeals presented in any particular persuasive communication" (pgs. 225–226). Ultimately, they concluded that the personality variables they measured only weakly predicted general persuasibility, if at all. However, they presented their investigation within a more general framework that allows for "communication-bound" dispositional factors. They summarized the nascent research on persuasion showing that the effectiveness of messages, sources, and contexts can depend on the recipient's disposition (pgs. 6–13). For example, the influence of fear appeals was postulated to depend on the recipient's trait anxiety (Janis & Feshbach, 1954), and the influence of peer versus authority figure communicators depended on the recipient's interpersonal confidence and authoritarian values (Berkowitz & Lundy, 1957). Anticipating the relevance of affective versus cognitive matching effects (see Aquino et al., Chapter 3, this volume), several years later, Anderson (1968) presented a preliminary study of personality traits that correspond to the strength of beliefs and strength of affect underlying social attitudes with the goal of identifying the sorts of messages that would be best suited to changing the attitudes of different people. That is, "it should be possible to bolster the potency of persuasive communications directed at specific personality types by hand-tailoring the messages to emphasize an attack upon that aspect (either 'belief' or 'affect,' or both)" which is most closely aligned with that personality type (p. 34).

These early moments in persuasion science provided psychological frameworks and empirical support for the long-held intuition that persuaders must "know their audience" to be successful. However, what has been less clear in this early research—and even in the more modern research to follow—is the explanation for *why* personalized persuasion is more effective than non-matched or mismatched appeals. As noted, the earliest advocates presented the idea intuitively, basing its explanation for effectiveness on the author's personal experience or appeals to common sense. Subsequently, research on personalized persuasion left the mechanism of its influence to be tied to the prevailing theories of the day. For example, functional theorists like Katz (1960) speculated that functionally matched messages provided arguments that were more psychologically comforting or affirming, which made the outcome of the appeal more rewarding (e.g., it better fulfilled a relevant need). For learning theorists like Hovland et al. (1953), personalization provided an incentive to learn the information in the message. For cognitive response theorists like Edwards (1990), it was speculated that matched messages better resonated with the cognitive structure surrounding the advocated topic, making it easier for these messages to challenge and overwrite the relevant associations. Thus, as perspectives in psychology changed, so, too, did the proposed mechanism for personalization.

Most recently, scholars have often attributed the influence of personalized persuasion to a psychological state called "fit" (see Cesario et al., 2008). Consider the research on moral reframing, where politically liberal and conservative recipients are more persuaded by moral arguments that match their ideological views. In a review of these findings, Feinberg and Willer (2019) write that the "primary explanation" for these effects is that "targets perceive a 'match' between their moral convictions and the argument" (pg. 4). They explain that such matches elicit "feelings of comfort or familiarity" and/or the implication that the source of the message is an in-group member (pgs. 4–5). Although these fit-relevant mediators are indeed compelling parts of the process that come with empirical support, they do not fully account for why these variables ultimately result in revised attitudes or behaviors. For example, Feinberg and Willer (2015) found that a moral matching effect was statistically mediated by self-reported judgments that "the article's message resonates with your values" and present this as evidence for what "drives the persuasive impact of moral reframing" (p. 1674); however, this does not document a psychological process by which perceptions of value resonance would necessarily produce greater attitude change.

A more complete account of the psychological processes responsible for personalization's persuasion outcomes needs to clearly articulate how people arrive at their final attitudes or behaviors. For instance, perhaps the perceived overlap between a message and the recipient's values leads the recipient to generate more favorable thoughts in response to the message, which they use to reason about the proposal's merits, or perhaps a feeling of fit validates the positive thoughts generated and these thoughts are thus used more in forming a judgment. Indeed, Cesario et al. (2008) related the state of fit to the elaboration likelihood model of persuasion (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986), which holds that variables such as fit can produce attitude change by different mechanisms in different situations. In the present book, the chapter authors each tackle the underlying process most described in their focal area, and these ideas (among others) are organized in an integrative chapter on the psychological processes of personalized persuasion (Briñol & Petty, Chapter 18, this volume).

Overview of the Book

This volume provides an up-to-date summary of the research on personalized persuasion, recruiting the foremost experts who refer to both classic and contemporary research to provide insight on this impactful communication technique. Accordingly, the chapters and the volume as a whole are divided into two primary sections.

Basic Types of Matching

In the first section, eight chapters highlight well-studied variables used to personalize persuasion to its intended recipient. These chapters define many of the most examined communication factors that can be more or less in sync with a recipient, consider the evidence for what happens when those factors and the recipients (mis)match in different ways, and explore what drives those effects. Critically, these chapters establish basic principles of personalized persuasion that could apply broadly across applied domains of communication.

In Chapter 2, Joyal-Desmarais, Rothman, and Snyder expand upon the original matching work by Katz (1960) and examine how the attitude functions of recipients can be used to instantiate "motivational matching." In Chapter 3, Aquino, Alparone, Haddock, Maio, and Wolf identify how emotional versus rational appeals can resonate differently depending on three types of recipient characteristics. Chapter 4 by Le and Fujita uses a well-studied notion in the social psychological literature, construal level theory, to show how matches can be implemented across various levels of psychological distance. In Chapter 5, Lee identifies how people's fundamental motivational orientations (i.e., promotion- vs. prevention-focus) can similarly enact personalized persuasion. In Chapter 6, Luttrell defines several ways in which messages can constitute a moral appeal and highlights the recipient characteristics that moderate their impact. In Chapter 7, Fleming describes how people's myriad social identities can be used to create greater attitude change via personalization—and when it can backfire. In Chapter 8, Shavitt takes a broader lens to people's cultural worldviews and shows how a variety of variables—some even covered in the earlier chapters—can be used to create personalized persuasion. Lastly, in Chapter 9, Albarracín and Zhou consider how the intended outcome of persuasion (i.e., attitude vs. belief vs. behavior change) is relevant to the personalization process.

Although we present these personalization-relevant variables in separate chapters for clarity and to reflect the relatively independent literatures that have emerged on each, there is certainly overlap among them. For example, an audience's core values can predispose them to resonate with certain messaging strategies, and this value-based resonance can be relevant to the function of their attitude on the issue (Chapter 2), their moral compass (Chapter 6), or their cultural orientation (Chapter 8). Therefore, we hope that presenting these otherwise disparate literatures side-by-side inspires new insights and connections.

Applications of Matching

In the second half of the book, another eight chapters consider how personalized persuasion operates in a variety of important areas of communication

practice and application. These areas can include political campaigns, conversations with one's doctor, encouragement from a teacher, or posts encountered on social media. That is, rather than examine how single variables have been studied in personalized persuasion, these chapters examine how a suite of variables (often those identified in the first half of the volume) have been studied within a single domain. In other words, for each of these applied domains, any of the basic types of matching from the previous section could be leveraged to personalize a particular messaging strategy. The peculiarities of a particular domain, however, also inspire the use of specific and novel matches, which are detailed in each chapter.

In Chapter 10, Rothman, Rogers, and Mann describe how personalized persuasion has been used to motivate people to adopt healthy behaviors. In Chapter 11, Druckman covers the history and use of personalized persuasion in the political domain, such as motivating people to vote for a specific candidate. In Chapter 12, Teeny examines the use of personalized persuasion in a domain arguably most known for its influence – consumer behaviour – and describes the history of its use across different advertising channels. In Chapter 13, Goldberg and Gustafson examine personalized persuasion in environmental communication, an area with a rich history of testing messaging effects but with more mixed evidence for the benefits of personalization than in other domains. In Chapter 14, Pietri, Derricks, and Johnson highlight how personalized persuasion can extend to educational contexts, particularly for interventions aimed at increasing the representation of marginalized groups. In Chapter 15, Hebel-Sela, Hameiri, and Halperin present a framework for understanding how interventions to reduce prejudice can benefit from personalization. In Chapter 16, Susmann, Siev, Wegener, and Petty apply personalized persuasion in a previously less-tested domain but one with increasing importance: the spread and remediation of misinformation and conspiracy theories. Then, in Chapter 17, Vaid, Harari, and Matz describe how personalized persuasion is used online in social media and in the evolving digital world.

Mechanisms and Open Questions

Following the applied section, the volume concludes with an ever-important discussion of the possible processes behind the effectiveness of personalized persuasion, as well as a discussion of the remaining questions in the literature on this persuasion approach. That is, in Chapter 18, Briñol and Petty review the core psychological mechanisms that plausibly drive the persuasive advantages or disadvantages of personalized persuasion. These basic processes cut across types of matching and the domains in which they apply. By understanding how and why persuasive success depends on the matches between

the persuasion environment and the audience, scholars and practitioners can generate more refined interventions that account for the mechanisms likely to drive persuasion in a given situation. Finally, in Chapter 19, we (Teeny, Luttrell, and Petty) offer a summary of the key themes that emerged throughout the book and identify some critical questions for future research in this field.

Conclusion

In all, we believe this volume assembles a sweeping, up-to-date survey of social science research on personalized persuasion and its applications. Naturally, this volume is not exhaustive of the many ways in which recipients can be aligned with elements of a persuasion environment, and we highlight some promising additional types of personalization in the concluding chapter. We anticipate and hope that investigators will continue to consider a variety of ways in which persuasion can be personalized and carefully study whether these matches enhance or diminish a message's impact and why. By presenting an array of insights from a diverse collection of researchers across different disciplines, we expect that this volume will spark new ideas for understanding the psychology of personalized persuasion as well as implementing and defending against personalized communication strategies in everyday life.

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