

# Political Culture Research Methodology

and

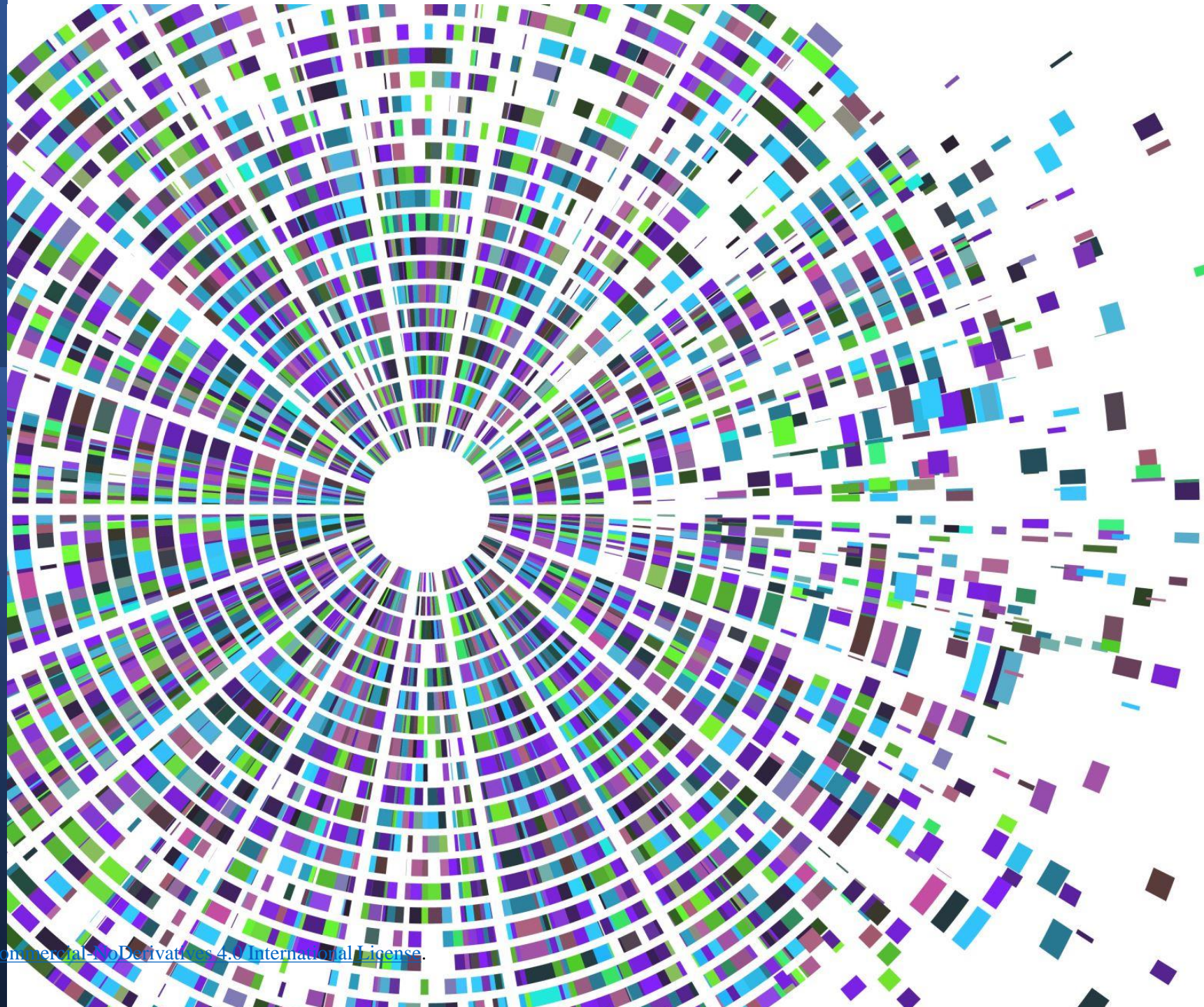
## The Research Methodology Areas Based on the Advanced Technologies of the Artificial:

Bordering areas coming to a  
joint

Lecture

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ECPR Standing Group of Political Culture



# Political Culture Theory & Research: Background & Aims

- **Classic Foundation & Aims:**
  - **Theory:** Political Culture Theory has been founded and aimed at the study of political participation and stability of the democratic regimes (Almond & Verba, 1963)
  - **Methodology:** measurement of political attitudes toward government, governance, and public policy
- **Further theoretical developments:**
  - **Theory:** value theory has been intensively employed in further theoretical developments, but not outside the classic framework
  - **Methodology:** classic methodology extended by value-centered measurement methodologies, but still within the framework of classic methodology
- **Critics & Debates: require a clear definition and methodology of the political culture theory**
  - Theoretical status: ontology and epistemology
  - Methodology able to support the theoretical status

# Questions:

- **Questions:**

**Q1: Why** is political culture theory bouncing back and forth in the political science arena? **What** made possible its powerful comeback during the 1990s after communism has been deposed in the countries from the eastern half of Europe?

**Q2: What** kind of definitional approach could bring philosophical status to political culture theory?

**Q3: What** could political culture theory explain, and **how**?

**Q4: What** is it that the research methodologies based on the advanced technologies of the artificial could contribute to an enhanced definitional and methodological identity of political culture theory?

## Answers:

### This presentation aims to address:

**A1:** The conceptual and methodological limitations of the **classic definition of political culture theory** (Almond & Verba, 1963) and the solutions provided by some **potential definitions** of political culture theory (Mishler and Pollack, 2003; Fuchs, 2007; Welch, 2013)

**A2:** The proper ways in which various **research methodologies based on the advanced technologies of the artificial** (Voinea and Neumann, Eds., 2020) could contribute to both definition and methodology in political culture theory

**A3:** Shaping the idea of a paradigmatic shift of the political culture research methodology toward classes of methodologies based on the *sciences and technologies of the artificial*, the concept of “**Computational Political Culture**” (Voinea, 2016) is informally addressed and presented

**A4: Why** “computational political culture” would be necessary or, at least, useful?

# Arguments (A1)

- **A1:** The conceptual and methodological limitations of the **classic definition of political culture theory** (Almond & Verba, 1963) and the solutions provided by some **potential definitions** of political culture theory (Mishler and Pollack, 2003; Fuchs, 2007; Welch, 2013)
- **The Classic Definition:**

“The term *political culture* thus refers to the specifically political orientations – attitudes toward the political system and its various parts, and attitudes toward the role of the self in the system [...] we employ the concept of culture in only one of its many meanings: that of psychological orientation toward social objects. When we speak of the political culture of a society, we refer to the political system as internalized in the cognitions, feelings, and evaluations of its population.” (Almond and Verba, 1963: pp.12-13)
- **Limitation(s) of classic definition & methodology:**
  - As a theory of comparative analysis, classic political culture theory is a good way of placing in **causality** scenarios the evidence from survey data and attitudes measurements,
  - It **does not capture the complexity** of the interaction between the individuals or groups of citizens and the Government as policy maker, and the dynamics of the relationship between the citizen and the State.
  - classic **system theory** (Easton, 1965, Elazar, 1970), and classic **attitude measurement** methodology with their limitations (Voinea, 2020)
  - it aims at achieving **predictions** over political participation and democratic stability from survey research on attitudes toward government, governance, and democracy.
- **Potential new definition(s):**
  - Duality of political culture from the theory of culture (“neo-cultural synthesis”) perspective, “thick & thin” (Mishler & Pollack, 2003)
  - Duality of political culture from a philosophy perspective: inertial & fluid components (Welch, 2013)
  - Duality of political culture from a political science perspective: values & democratic regime’s performance (Inglehart, 1995), trust & legitimacy (Fuchs, 2007), justice system & legitimacy (Wegener, 2000)

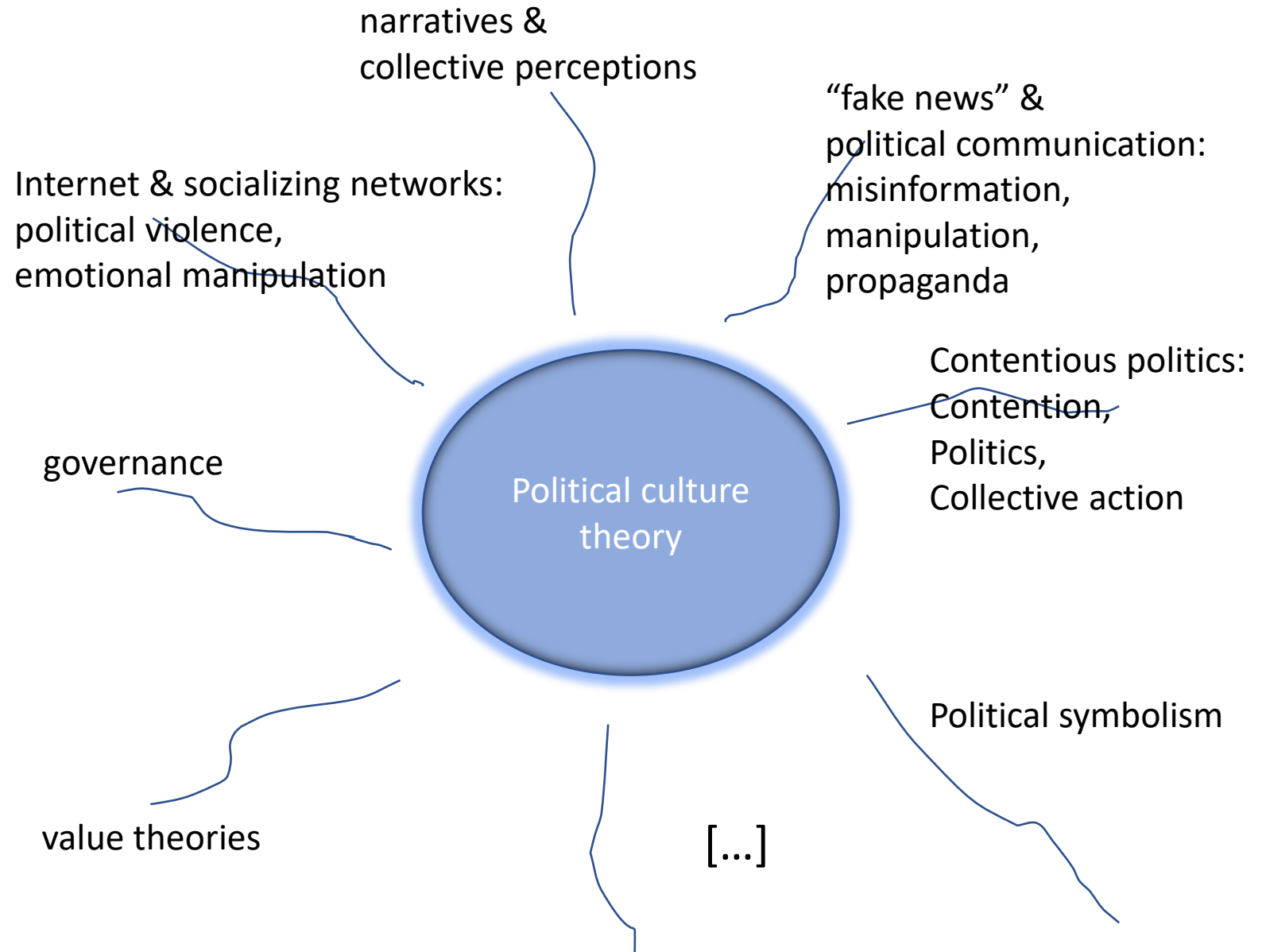
# Arguments (A2)

- **A2:** The proper ways in which various research methodologies based on the *advanced technologies of the artificial* (Voinea and Neumann (Eds.), 2020) could contribute to both definition and methodology in political culture theory
- **Research based on the sciences and technologies of the artificial:**
  - **Narratives theory & framework:** emergence of collective perceptions of public policy (Smith-Walter et al., 2020)
  - **Internet** & political violence, populism & emotional manipulation: cognitive systems (Edmonds, 2020)
  - **Social networks** & fake news, political communication, political propaganda, political discourse: AI + ML, Data Mining + ML, text & content & discourse analysis (Takikawa & Sakamoto, 2020)
  - **Contentious politics** (Tilly & Tarrow, 2015)
- **Relevant research areas:**
  - complexity and complex system,
  - AI & ML,
  - Data Mining & Big Data,
  - Web Semantics,
  - Text & Content Analysis

(see slides 7 and 8)

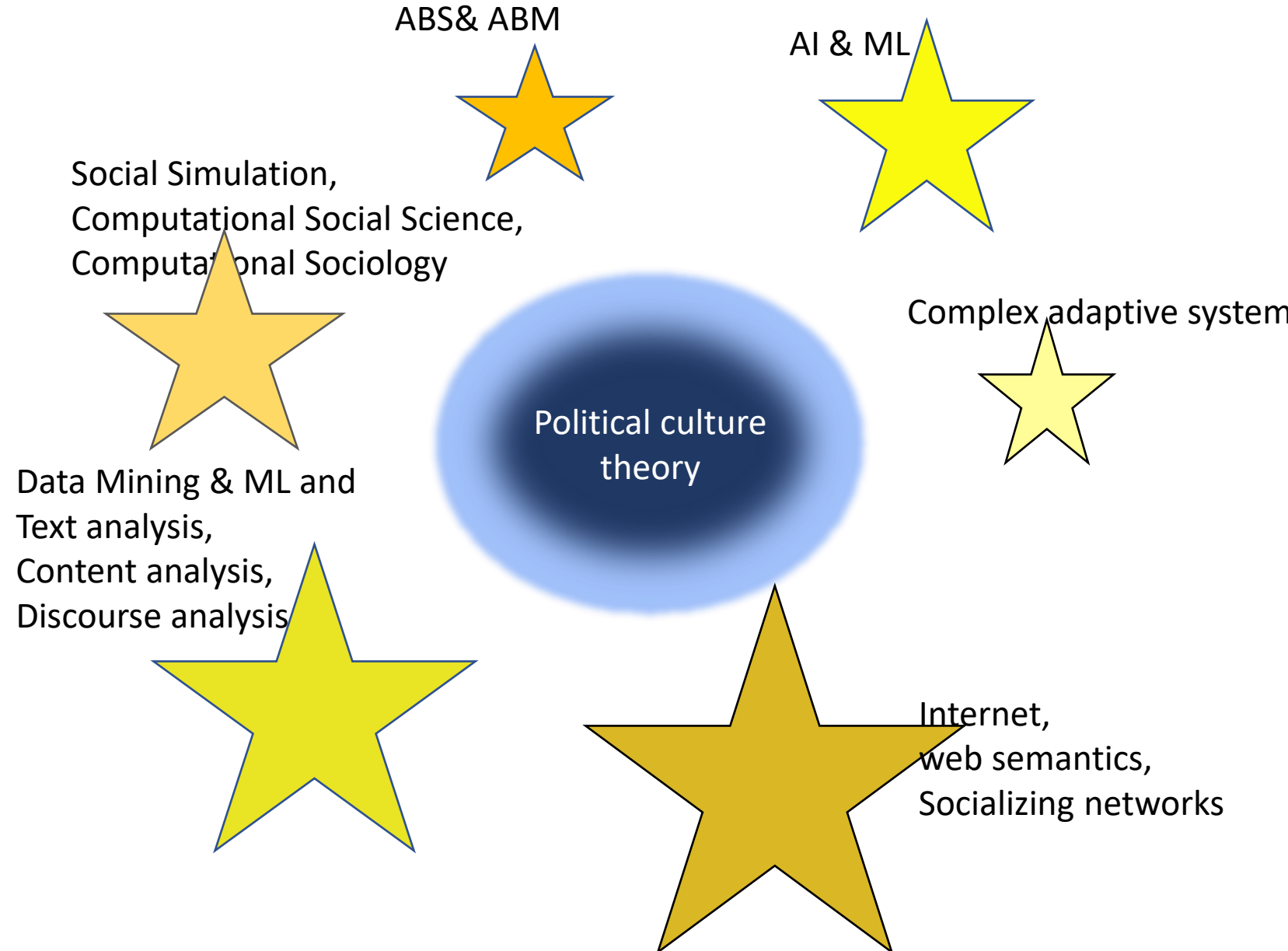
# Arguments (A2) (cont.)

## Independent, Parallel Research Developments



# Answers (A2) (cont.)

## Independent, Parallel Developments





# Answers (A2) (cont.)

## “Event” or “Meaning”?

- **Philosophy:** Ontology & Epistemology
- **Ontology:** “event” vs. “meaning”
  - Event: mechanisms & processes of governance, policy-making
  - Meaning: from political symbol; from political action & interaction
  - **Classic view:**
    - **event-based ontology** with meaning from knowledge representation & world model following from the attitude structure
  - **Later view:**
    - **event-based ontology** with meaning from both knowledge and value representation following from the attitude structure
  - **Mixed (dual) view:**
    - Meaning-based ontology with meaning from representations and meaning from interaction & communication (also following from the attitude structure as attitudes are themselves defined in a dual model, (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986))
  - **Complex view:**
    - Ontology of meaning with structural couplings between agent(s) and political system such that “events” are defined in terms of meaning emergence
- **Political Epistemology:**
  - *“how claims of knowledge, truth, and expertise impact political decisions and forms of legitimate authority”* (Hannon & Edenberg, 2020)
  - how attitudes, values, beliefs and interaction of citizens with government and the state generate/impact the legitimacy of political system
- **Methodology:**
  - Action & interaction paradigm: mechanisms & processes
  - Meaning and communication of meaning paradigm (Luhmann, 1995)

# Answers (A3) Computational Political Culture

**A3:** Shaping the idea of a paradigmatic shift of the political culture research methodology toward classes of methodologies based on the *sciences and technologies of the artificial*, the term “**Computational Political Culture**” (Voinea, 2016) is informally addressed and presented

## Computational Approaches to Political Science & Political Culture

- **Synthetic Cultures** (Hofstede & Pedersen, 1999): artificial culture
- **Computational Politics** (Tufekci, 2014): concerns the employment of digital technologies in the design of media and the research based on big data collection;
- **Agent-based modelling and simulation of political agents and systems:**
  - artificial societies (Epstein & Axtell, 1996)
  - voting systems and voting behaviors, (Reilly, 2001, 2003, 2006)
  - conflict, (Cederman, 1995; Cioffi-Revilla and Rouleau, 2010)
  - (political) collective action (Johnson, 2007)
  - public policy and narratives (Gilbert et al, 2018)
  - public opinion and beliefs (Deffuant et al., 2000)
- **Computational Political Culture (Voinea, 2016, 2017, 2021a, 2021b):**
  - **Informal description:** *Computational Political Culture* is an equivalent in political science of the previously similarly defined disciplines like Computational Social Science, Computational Sociology, Computational Economics, Computational Anthropology, etc.
  - **Informal definition:**

# Answers (A4)

## Computational Political Culture: Why would it be necessary or useful?

- **The Role of Political Culture in a Political System:**
  - intermediary level between society and polity which provides for:
  - emergence of meaning (from political symbol and political interaction), and communication of meaning between structural components of a political system,
  - dynamics of the political system (i.e., culture, society and polity) in a structural coupling
- **Computational Political Culture:**
  - an interdisciplinary field that aims at integrating the study of humans and political systems through the formal methodology of computational, mathematical and simulation models.
  - It provides for a theory on the meaning emergence and dynamics in virtual complex political systems with internal structures including artificial polities, artificial cultures, artificial societies and artificial agents.
- **Ontology of *meaning***
  - Significance in terms of symbols and representations
  - Significance in terms of emergence of meaning from sources (agents; visual and audio sources agents), actions and interactions
- **Epistemology:**
  - how knowledge & cognition, value, belief and attitude impacts the political decision, political legitimacy, dynamics of polities
- **What does it offer to political culture research?**
  - **Virtual Lab:** virtual experimental settings for the study of political systems and political cultures
  - **Virtual political objects:** polity, political culture, government & governance, policy, society, institutions, agents
  - **Explanation of political participation,** resilience of democratic systems, support for democracy; explains political participation in terms of emergence and dynamics of meaning from collective perceptions, collective actions, political attitudes
  - **Achieves not predictions, but (path-dependent) dynamic evolutions of complex artificial systems composed of polity, political culture, and society.**

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