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Part I

Political Minds

CHAPTER 1

Agendas in Action

Mitt Romney was defeated by self-interest. Not his own, but the self-interested voting of poor minorities and those meddling kids.

At least that's how he saw things in the week after his 2012 election loss to the incumbent, President Barack Obama. On a conference call with disappointed fund-raisers and donors, Romney offered his post-game analysis: "What the president's campaign did was focus on certain members of his base coalition, give them extraordinary financial gifts from the government, and then work very aggressively to turn them out to vote, and that strategy worked."

Romney and his strategists listed the policy gifts and the beneficiaries. Obama bestowed "amnesty" on certain young immigrants by executive order, a move that "was obviously very, very popular with Hispanic voters." The president passed Obamacare, "which basically is ten thousand dollars a family," a good price for the votes of poorer Americans. As for those meddling kids, they got to stay on their parents' health insurance plans, received cuts in student-loan interest rates, and got "free contraceptives," something that was "very big with young, college-aged women." Romney's summary: "It's a proven political strategy, which is give a bunch of money to a group and, guess what, they'll vote for you."

Romney surely could have added other "gifts" to his list. In the spring of 2012, not long before Obama issued his new directive for young immigrants, he announced his support for same-sex marriage, something that, along with his administration's earlier repeal of the military's "don't ask, don't tell" policy, pleased another solid Democratic group, gays and lesbians. The Obama administration's support for General Motors and Chrysler probably improved his standing with union workers and

Michiganders. His support of payroll tax cuts and extended unemployment benefits particularly helped poorer people struggling through the Great Recession. His appointment of a Jewish woman and also of a "wise Latina" to the Supreme Court showed his support for abortion-rights and civil-rights policies so popular with feminists and lefty Ivy Leaguers.

Liberal columnist Clarence Page, among others, responded to Romney's "gifts" analysis with the inevitable charge of hypocrisy: "That President Obama sure is a clever fellow, giving so many Americans what they want. I wonder why that notion apparently didn't appeal to Romney? Oh, right. It did. He promised seniors, for example, that he'd restore President Obama's $716 billion in Medicare cuts. . . . Romney looked like Santa Claus to upper-income earners with his promises to protect them from Obama's proposed income tax hikes. He also promised Wall Street that he would roll back the Dodd-Frank financial regulations that were legislated to rein in the abuses that led to the 2008 financial crash."[1]

From the right, in a piece for the libertarian website reason.com, Ira Stoll condemned such hypocrisy charges as further hypocrisy: "[T]here's a double standard at work. When reporters suggest that donors to *Republican* causes are motivated by self-interested desire to keep their taxes low and their businesses unhampered by environmental or labor regulations, *that's* groundbreaking investigative journalism. . . . Yet when Romney suggests that *Democratic* voters might have been motivated by self-interest, his comments are condemned."[2]

Perhaps more peculiarly, even some of Romney's supposed Republican allies were as critical as his political opponents. Louisiana governor Bobby Jindal said: "If we want people to like us, we have to like them first. And you don't start to like people by insulting them and saying their votes were bought." Even Newt Gingrich called Romney's comments "nuts."

In certain respects, these strong reactions from both left and right might seem surprising. Elected officials' job, after all, is to advocate policies, and different policies usually work in favor of some people's interests and against others'. The major supporters and opponents of different policies frequently include those most helped or most hurt by the policies. Immigrants tend to prefer immigrant-friendly policies. Lesbians

and gays tend to prefer LGBT-friendly policies. Poorer people tend to prefer robust government assistance with health care. Students tend to prefer lower college costs. Those on birth control tend to prefer cheaper birth control. Rich people tend to prefer lower taxes on rich people. Wall Street executives tend to prefer relaxed financial regulation. *Of course* the respective campaigns emphasized how their favored policies would help people. *Of course* different policies appeal to some but not to others. That's sort of the point of elections.

Indeed, as Stoll noted, the hubbub over Romney's comments calls to mind journalist Michael Kinsley's fitting observation: "A gaffe is when a politician tells the truth—some obvious truth he isn't supposed to say."[3] Romney's "gifts" phrasing may have betrayed an unseemly bitterness over his recent loss, but his comments were largely on target: Campaigns try to turn out different groups of voters based on the particular policies those voters favor, and, often, the policies voters favor have a lot to do with their interests. Why is it such a big deal to say this out loud?

In this book, our goal is to explain why people hold the political positions that they do—why, that is, different people hold different views on areas like immigration, government spending on health care and the poor, same-sex marriage, abortion, and so on. A large part of the answer will be found in the kind of (unpopular) explanation Romney offered: it's about people's interests. Identifying where people's interests lie is, in some cases, pretty easy. Sure, as Romney pointed out, people who have less money have an interest in the state moving money from the richer to the poorer.

However, in other cases, while the key issue is still interests, identifying how particular policies advance people's interests can be trickier. Are some people really better (or worse) off under different policy regimes about "cultural" issues surrounding sex and religion? As we'll see, the answer is "yes," and once we figure out who is better off under which regime, we'll have gone a long way to figuring out who favors, and who opposes, different policies.

Looking for where people's interests lie will lead us to many of the familiar demographic features political analysts and pollsters have been looking at for decades. It will lead us to some lesser-known features as well.

By the time we're done, we hope to have provided an explanation—or, at least, a big part of the explanation—for people's political issue positions across the American spectrum. Along the way we'll also explore some key features of the modern coalitional alignments of the parties, and the perplexing reality that it's taboo to talk truthfully about the fact that politicians try to appeal to voters' interests.

To do all that, however, we have to take a careful look at data.

A lot of data.

Slicing and Dicing

As election night unfolded, NBC's Chuck Todd, analyzing incoming returns and exit polls, expressed the emerging conventional wisdom on Obama's impending victory: "The story of this election is demographics. The Republican party has not kept up with the changing face of America. . . . It's the growth of the Hispanic communities in various places. . . . [T]hey look like core Democratic voters tonight. Again, the story of this election is going to be demographics when all is said and done. The Obama campaign was right. . . . They built a campaign for the twenty-first century America. The Republican party has some serious soul-searching to do when you look at these numbers."[4]

Looking at the numbers isn't just for the pros anymore. On election night, the public has access to huge amounts of information from exit polls. Anyone with an Internet connection and a hint of interest in politics can get online and follow along as the commentators slice and dice a deluge of demographic data.

Overall, Obama won 51% of the popular vote to Romney's 47% (with the other 2% going to third-party candidates)—a 4-point win for Obama. But this 4-point margin masks wildly lopsided demographic splits revealed by the exit polls.

By far the biggest deal in American party politics these days is the difference in voting patterns by race and ethnicity.[5] Obama won African Americans by 87 points. Obama won Latinos and Asians by around 45 points. Romney won whites by 20 points.

Another fundamental set of differences involves religion. Romney may have won whites overall by 20 points, but Obama won Jews by 39 points and whites with no religious affiliation by 32 points. Romney cleaned up with his fellow Mormons, winning them by 57 points. Romney also won white Protestants by 39 points and white Catholics by 19 points. Across racial groups, Romney won those who go to church more than once a week by 27 points and weekly churchgoers by 17 points; Obama won people who never go to church by 28 points.

Lesbians, gays, and bisexuals were also huge Obama supporters, favoring the president by 54 points. In fact, according to the exit polls, had the election only included heterosexual voters, the popular vote would have been pretty close to a tie.

Obama took big cities by 40 points (these populations, after all, contain lots of minorities, lots of less religious whites, and relatively more lesbians, gays, and bisexuals). Romney won rural areas by 24 points (these populations, after all, contain lots of white, heterosexual Christians).

Poorer people tended to support Obama and richer people tended to support Romney. For example, Obama won those with incomes under $30,000 by 28 points while Romney won those with incomes above $100,000 by 10 points. These income results obviously relate in part to racial differences, with minorities typically being poorer than whites.

On education, the story starts off in a way that looks consistent with the income differences we just saw: Obama won among those without high school diplomas by 29 points. Those in the middle were pretty evenly distributed, with Obama barely eking out people with high school diplomas but not bachelor's degrees and Romney winning those with bachelor's degrees but not graduate degrees. But then there's a noticeable outlier: Obama, not Romney, won among the most educated group (those with graduate degrees) by 13 points. By the end of the book, we'll see why—why, that is, high income tends to lead to Republican support while high education tends to lead to Democratic support—but it'll take a while to put the pieces together.

The marriage gap shows up: Obama won unmarried people by 27 points; Romney won married people by 14 points. The age gap shows up, too: Obama won young adults (ages eighteen to twenty-nine) by

23 points; Romney won seniors (ages sixty-five and higher) by 12 points. And, of course, the gender gap: Obama won women by 11 points; Romney won men by 7 points.

These last differences, though, aren't in the same ballpark as those we started with for race, religion, and sexual orientation.[6] In fact, despite persistent media talk of the liberalness of young people, note this nugget from the 2012 exit polls: *If the election had only involved white voters between ages eighteen and twenty-nine, Romney would have won by 7 points*.

Political professionals think of voters in terms of coalitions, the key point being that members of various demographic groups tend to respond in different ways to different issues.[7] Groups such as whites with no religious affiliation and African Americans may vote mostly for Democrats, but this doesn't mean they share the same policy views or have the same issue priorities. For example, 70% of whites with no religious affiliation support the Supreme Court's ban on school prayer; only 26% of African Americans agree.[8] When it comes to government spending on African Americans, in contrast, while 73% of African Americans think there should be higher spending, only 30% of whites with no religious affiliation agree. These two groups have different reasons for voting for Democrats.

With ever increasing, data-driven sophistication, political professionals analyze not "the public," generally, but (increasingly smaller) *segments* of the public. Sasha Issenberg's book, *The Victory Lab*, provides a fascinating glimpse into the modern development of "micro-targeting" and other efforts to group the voting population into coherent clusters with shared policy concerns. In his 2004 book, *The Two Americas*, veteran Democratic pollster Stan Greenberg described in detail more than twenty overlapping demographic categories, some solidly in the Republican coalition, some solidly in the Democratic coalition, and some up for grabs. The book was a detailed example of demographic political analysis, flowing from various demographic features, to groups' different policy priorities and positions, to party allegiances and voting patterns that ultimately reflect demographic-driven coalitions of diverse policy preferences.

In discussing Latino Americans, for instance, Greenberg stated that they have tended to be attracted to Democrats because of shared support

for civil rights for immigrants and policies providing greater economic security for people with lower incomes. In other words, the Democratic pollster in 2004 gave practically the same analysis as the Republican candidate in 2012, who described on his postelection conference call how Latinos had been wooed by Democrats primarily through Obama's "amnesty" efforts and the economic subsidies in Obamacare. Romney wasn't, then, out on a political limb; he was expressing a widely held view of pollsters and strategists in both parties.

Sometimes the demographic labels of pollsters make their way into the public's political conversation. Often the focus is on various groups of swing voters—soccer moms, office-park dads, Walmart moms, NASCAR dads, and a host of others. Our own approach will be to look closely at how and why different demographic features relate to different kinds of political issues. Someone who goes to church regularly, for example, is likely to be more conservative on abortion and related lifestyle issues, but how much people go to church doesn't have much at all to do with being conservative on immigration or affirmative action or Social Security. Once we've seen how and why different demographic features relate to different issue opinions, we'll get into the real slicing and dicing, breaking up the public into lots of different groups with various collections of views. This will lead to an expanded perspective on the variety of modern political positions.

The Bichromatic Rainbow

Sometimes it can seem that there's little need for the demographic obsessions of political professionals who target specific "messages" to narrow groups. Aren't there really just two big groups—liberals/Democrats on one side and conservatives/Republicans on the other—and, thus, really just two big "messages"? Comedian Jon Stewart and the team behind *The Daily Show* put it this way in *America (The Book)*: "Each party has a platform, a *prix fixe* menu of beliefs making up its worldview. The candidate can choose one of the two platforms, but remember—no substitutions. For example, do you support universal healthcare? Then you must also want a ban on assault weapons. Pro–limited government?

Congratulations, you are also anti-abortion. Luckily, all human opinion falls neatly into one of the two clearly defined camps. Thus, the two-party system elegantly reflects the bichromatic rainbow that is American political thought."[9]

These remarks were made with tongue firmly placed in cheek, of course. But a number of other very smart people have made essentially the same point without any hint of humor. Economist Bryan Caplan in his book, *The Myth of the Rational Voter*, asserted (with his tongue in its usual non-cheeky place): "There are countless issues that people care about, from gun control and abortion to government spending and the environment. . . . If you know a person's position on one, you can predict his views on the rest to a surprising degree. In formal statistical terms, political opinions look one-dimensional. They boil down roughly to one big opinion, plus random noise."[10] In a *New York Times* online opinion piece, psychologist and linguist Steven Pinker made similar claims: "Why, if you know a person's position on gay marriage, can you predict that he or she will want to increase the military budget and decrease the tax rate . . . ? [There may] be coherent mindsets beneath the diverse opinions that hang together in right-wing and left-wing belief systems. Political philosophers have long known that the ideologies are rooted in different conceptions of human nature—a conflict of visions so fundamental as to align opinions on dozens of issues that would seem to have nothing in common."[11] Caplan and Pinker didn't just make this stuff up; plenty of political scientists have stated that people typically show a general left-right coherence in their policy views.[12]

In the course of the 2012 campaign, in response to complaints about a misleading ad attacking Obama over welfare, Romney's chief pollster, Neil Newhouse, said: "We're not going to let our campaign be dictated by fact-checkers." But for social scientists like us, fact-checking is what it's all about. So, when it comes to liberal-conservative coherence among the general public, what are the facts? Do Americans really take their political positions from a prix fixe menu, or is it more like a buffet?

Let's consider two items from the U.S. General Social Survey (GSS), a large database on Americans' lives and politics that we will rely on heavily throughout the book. One item asks whether the person agrees that homosexual couples should have the right to marry; potential answers

range from strongly agree to strongly disagree, and the respondent can also indicate that they don't have an opinion one way or another. Answers to this question correlate strongly with answers to the question of whether people view themselves as "liberal" or "conservative" overall. (Throughout the book, we're using the terms "liberal" and "conservative" in the way that politically aware contemporary Americans typically use them.)[13] The other item asks whether the person thinks that government should do something to reduce income differences between rich and poor, or whether the person thinks that government should not concern itself with income differences; here, the respondent can give a response leaning heavily one way or the other and can also land in the middle, indicating weak or mixed opinions. Answers to this question have a big correlation with answers to the question of whether people generally prefer Republicans or Democrats.

If we take the assertions from Caplan and Pinker (not to mention Stewart) seriously, we should be able to take people's views on one of these issues and know their views on the other issue. People who favor same-sex marriage should generally favor government reduction of income differences. People who are opposed to government reduction of income differences should generally be opposed to same-sex marriage.

The data are decidedly less tidy. In the GSS sample over the past ten years, 21% of people were liberal on both same-sex marriage and government reduction of income differences, 19% were conservative on both, 18% were conservative on marriage but liberal on income, 12% were liberal on marriage but conservative on income, and the other 30% had in-the-middle responses on one or both items. In other words, around 40% of the public were either consistently liberal or consistently conservative on these two items, around 30% had mismatched views (liberal on one and conservative on the other), and around 30% expressed no opinion one way or the other on at least one of these issues.

Pinker asserted that if you know a person's views on same-sex marriage you will also know their views on redistributive issues. In fact, though, most people aren't so accommodating. In the GSS data, people who support same-sex marriage have a 50% chance of wanting government to reduce income differences, a 20% chance of being in the middle, and a 30% chance of opposing income redistribution. On the other side,

people who oppose same-sex marriage have a 42% chance of opposing income redistribution, a 17% chance of being in the middle, and a 41% chance of supporting it.

One possible reason that Pinker and Caplan overstate the liberal-conservative coherence of public opinion is that it fits their own experience (and, in fact, ours as well). That is, liberal-conservative coherence is more common among some groups than others, and the group where it is most common is that of people like us—white voters with bachelor's degrees.[14] Even among this group, however, only around 50% land either consistently liberal or consistently conservative on same-sex marriage and income redistribution (as opposed to a mere 40% of the general public, as we noted above). White voters with bachelor's degrees, while probably a tremendously high percentage of the people Pinker, Caplan, and we hang out with, constitute only around 20% of American adults. The other 80% are not of European ancestry, or don't have bachelor's degrees, or don't vote.

Roughly 40% of American adults have two but not three of these features—white voters without bachelor's degrees, African American voters with bachelor's degrees, and so on. The other 40% have one or none of these features, and among them, *liberal-conservative coherence is fundamentally absent*—about a third land either consistently liberal or consistently conservative on same-sex marriage and income redistribution, about a third have mismatched views, and the other third hold neutral opinions on one or both issues. Among these individuals, that is, one learns *exactly nothing* about a person's view on one issue by learning their view on the other. Caplan and Pinker may have phrased their conclusions in terms of *people*, but these conclusions hold primarily for *people like them (and us)*.

Crucially, we've been talking about only two issues here—same-sex marriage and government income redistribution. If we add others—affirmative action, immigration, abortion, health care, Social Security, and so on—simple views of liberal-conservative coherence fall apart even further. Now, it is true that certain subsets of these issues do hang together pretty tightly. If you know someone's view on same-sex marriage, for example, you've got a good shot at guessing their view on abortion. If you know someone's view on government income redistri-

bution, you've got a good shot at guessing their view on government support for health care (which typically involves, after all, some kind of economic redistribution). But things break down when one strays too far in issue domains. Occasionally, indeed, the safest bets involve ideological mismatch. Americans who want to reduce immigration levels (a "conservative" position) are actually more rather than less likely to want to increase funding for Social Security (a "liberal" position). Americans who support affirmative action for women (a "liberal" position) are more rather than less likely to think that the Supreme Court should allow school prayer (a "conservative" position).

There may be only two significant political *parties* in the United States (Democratic and Republican) and two or three frequently discussed ideological *labels* (liberal, conservative, and perhaps libertarian), but people defy simple categories, holding every possible combination of views on various issues.

Even for people with high levels of liberal-conservative coherence, the kinds of demographic properties we described earlier when looking at exit polls often drive the overall skew to the left or to the right. We'll take a close look later at Ivy League graduates, for example, and see that their overall liberalism or conservatism relates strongly to things like race, sexual orientation, gender, religion, and income.

The demographics are especially interesting because they often provide better insight into what causes what. No one would believe, for instance, that being a liberal or a Democrat can cause whites to become African Americans, or heterosexuals to become homosexuals, or men to become women. It also seems a stretch to say that a liberal ideology frequently causes people to abandon Christianity in favor of Judaism or agnosticism, or causes people to be poorer rather than richer. There may be some connections like these—people committed to income equality choosing nonprofit jobs over Wall Street positions, for example—but it would be nuts (as Gingrich might say) to suppose that the connections between demographics and politics are *mostly* or even largely a matter of people adjusting demographics to political ideologies. When one sees political patterns relating to demographics, then, one can rule out at least some of the possible causal pathways. The arrow doesn't lead from ideology to demographics, at least most of the time.

In this book, our main questions are the *why* questions. We are psychologists, not political professionals. When analyzing political opinions, our job differs from those seeking to maximize vote-getting. Political professionals are usually satisfied when they identify *that* connections exist between demographics and policy preferences, using this information to help candidates and marketers craft specific messages to woo specific voters and get them to the polls. Our job is to go a step deeper.

Our conclusion will sound familiar to political professionals and commentators who are used to thinking in terms of complex issue combinations that are driven by different demographic features, but we'll provide a fresh focus on the interests driving these connections. We'll look at how people tend to support policies that are in the interests of themselves, their families, their friends, and their social networks. We'll look at how people tend to support coalitions that work to advance their own policy preferences. And, yes, we'll look at how the demographic features typical of political targeting (race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, income, education, etc.) are often key signs of diverse underlying interests that drive different issue positions.

We'll take it step by step, looking at a few different areas of political conflict, tracing people's competing interests, identifying demographic features that relate to those interests. These efforts will produce a small number of essential insights that highlight the major connections. Then, using these lessons, we'll see how to combine them to produce more complex pictures of different groups.

We'll supply some of the tools needed to keep up with modern politics. We'll provide some insights to make pretty good guesses about why, in a given campaign, a politician might run different ads in different markets and highlight different themes in speeches to different interest groups. On election night, when commentators pore over exit polls and talk about Latinos, white churchgoers, college-educated women, or a host of other groups, our discussions will illuminate what's really driving the differences. As the parties consider how to alter their positions to attract new voters—something that Republicans wrestled with on the subject of immigration after the 2012 election—the lessons of later chapters will show many ways in which these changes would help

with some specific groups of voters while inevitably hurting the party's chances with other specific groups of voters.

Ignoring Some Usual Suspects

Our approach resonates well with that of some political scientists, particularly those with closer ties to the concrete world of political professionals. In contrast, our approach runs counter to that of others, especially those that take a more abstract approach.

For many political scientists, interests aren't very interesting and demographics are mere "controls" in statistical models, items to be brushed over as the more central determinants of political views are revealed. Often these central factors include ideologies, values, political personality items, and other "symbolic" foundations of the political mind. Our perspective, however, includes some very deep worries about these analyses.

To see one of our key worries, consider parties—not political parties, but party parties, where lots of people get together, mix, mingle, listen to music, nibble on snacks, have a few drinks, and so forth. Some people really like parties while other people don't. Why is that? Ask an undergraduate who has recently taken an intro psychology course, and they might give an answer that sounds pretty smart: It's because some people are extraverts and others are introverts.

But consider a follow-up question: How does one know that some people are extraverts and others are introverts? The answer, it turns out, is that people are asked a series of questions that often includes questions about . . . whether they like parties. Here are a few questions measuring extraversion and introversion from one of the most popular scales used by psychologists:

- Do you enjoy meeting new people?
- Can you usually let yourself go and enjoy yourself at a lively party?
- Can you easily get some life into a rather dull party?
- Do you like mixing with people?
- Can you get a party going?

Psychologists call people who answer "yes" to these kinds of questions "extraverts" and call people who answer "no" to these questions "introverts."

So what does it mean, then, to say that someone enjoys parties *because* they're an extravert? Personality psychologists often think of extraversion/introversion as an underlying trait that is doing the causing. But one has to be careful when it comes to actually studying these things. It's easy to slip into empirical results that boil down to simple circularity. Some people enjoy parties because they are extraverts, which we know they are because they enjoy parties. If we label people who answer "yes" to those questions above "party-likers," then the circularity becomes even more transparent: Why do some people like parties? Well, it's because they're party-likers.

The pattern is common in social science: Think of something one wants to explain (e.g., why some people are more outgoing than others); give people a set of survey questions that measures the very thing one wants to explain (e.g., a set of items about whether they're outgoing); give survey-takers' answers to those questions a name (e.g., extraversion); and then claim to have solved the puzzle (e.g., some people are outgoing because they're extraverts). It's such a common pattern, surely it deserves a name of its own. We'll call it: Direct Explanation Renaming Psychology Syndrome, or *DERP Syndrome* for short.

Examples abound across the social sciences, and are often particularly transparent when it comes to politics. In a 2002 article in the journal *Political Psychology*, for example, the authors wanted to explain why some people oppose government spending to assist African Americans, why some people think it's not the government's job to guarantee equal opportunity for different racial groups, why some people think minority groups should help themselves rather than having the government help them, and why some people oppose race-based affirmative action.[15] It's an interesting set of issues. So what's the answer?

The answer, according to the authors, is that the main explanation for conservative racial policy attitudes is found in *symbolic racism*. But now ask the follow-up question: How does one know whether someone suffers from symbolic racism? The answer here is classic DERP Syn-

drome. One knows that someone suffers from symbolic racism because the person answered survey questions generally indicating that they oppose efforts and rationales underlying minority advancing policies. Specifically, to measure "symbolic racism," the study had people answer the following questions, some of which were simple statements with which survey-takers could agree or disagree:

- Some say that black leaders have been trying to push too fast. Others feel that they haven't pushed fast enough. What do you think?
- How much of the racial tension that exists in the United States today do you think blacks are responsible for creating?
- How much discrimination against blacks do you feel there is in the United States today, limiting their chances to get ahead?
- It's really a matter of some people not trying hard enough; if blacks would only try harder they could be just as well off as whites.
- Irish, Italian, Jewish, and many other minorities overcame prejudice and worked their way up. Blacks should do the same.
- Generations of slavery and discrimination have created conditions that make it difficult for blacks to work their way out of the lower class.
- Over the past few years, blacks have gotten less than they deserve.
- Over the past few years, blacks have gotten more economically than they deserve.

Is it any wonder that "symbolic racism" is such a strong "explanation" of "racial policy preferences"? Literally translated, the claim is: The reason many people oppose efforts to advance racial equality is that they think, for example, that minorities should work their way up, that black leaders have been trying to push too fast, and that blacks have gotten more economically than they deserve. In short, people oppose these efforts because they oppose these efforts.

There are lots of other examples. A popular explanation for why people tend to oppose equality for women, gays and lesbians, and religious minorities is *right-wing authoritarianism*.[16] How does one know if someone has a bad case of right-wing authoritarianism? One asks them whether they agree or disagree with items like:

- Women should have to promise to obey their husbands when they get married.
- Gays and lesbians are just as healthy and moral as anybody else.
- Atheists and others who have rebelled against the established religions are no doubt every bit as good and virtuous as those who attend church regularly.
- Everyone should have their own lifestyle, religious beliefs, and sexual preferences, even if it makes them different from everyone else.
- A "woman's place" should be wherever she wants to be. The days when women are submissive to their husbands and social conventions belong strictly in the past.
- Homosexuals and feminists should be praised for being brave enough to defy "traditional family values."

Here's the Twitter version of explaining discriminatory views by citing right-wing authoritarianism: Some people oppose equality for women, gays, and religious minorities because they oppose equality for women, gays, and religious minorities. #DERPSyndrome.

When political scientists point to political "personality" features or "symbolic" predispositions or "values" as explanations for policy preferences, there's often an underlying DERPishness that leads back to the starting point. One asks questions about why people favor different policies. The answers are that it's because they favor those policies, or because they think it would be better if those policies prevailed, or because they approve of the people who advocate those policies. And it's back to square one.

We should note that we of course don't object to all uses of symbolic racism or right-wing authoritarianism (or egalitarianism, or social dominance orientation, or moral traditionalism, or countless other similar political measures). Such measures reflect people's differing policy views in important areas and could be used to investigate the ways in which such policy views influence, for example, voters' choices among candidates. Our objections involving DERP Syndrome arise when these measures are used to predict policy views that are basically the same as those in the measures themselves. Our main goal in this book is to

better understand the sources of competing views in widely contested policy areas, and it doesn't advance the ball to learn, for example, that people who oppose income redistribution oppose income redistribution, or that people who support meritocracy support meritocracy, or that people who favor the moral condemnation of promiscuity favor the moral condemnation of promiscuity. We hope to provide more informative accounts of these kinds of political positions.

Other items that are often used to explain particular issue opinions are political party preferences and ideological labels. One asks questions about why people favor different policies. One is told that whether people favor Democrats or Republicans correlates with their policy views. One is told that whether people say they're liberal or conservative correlates with their policy views. And one is told, in the end, that a big *cause* of having a left-leaning policy view in a given area is being a Democrat and being liberal.[17]

Party preferences, liberal/conservative labels, and DERPish variables are often cast as causes of particular policy views because of an important assumption: When it comes to political views, people go from general to specific, from broad "ideological commitments" and "party identifications" and slightly more generally worded DERPish measures to the particulars of individual policies.[18] Yet the opposite could well be true. It could be the case, for example, that many people choose to call themselves "liberal" or "conservative" (or "libertarian" or something else or none of the above) based on a kind of summation of their particular policy views.[19] It could be that many people prefer either Democrats or Republicans *because* they favor the policies of one or the other party.[20] It could be that many people endorse general kinds of "value" items (e.g., "it would be better if people were more equal") in large part *because* they have in mind some specific areas (race, sexual orientation, income, etc.) that make the general language appealing.[21]

Nonetheless, it's clear that, having picked a political party, people use that partisan preference to interpret all kinds of information. People favoring a party tend to view the economy as doing better when their party is in power, tend to worry less about foreign military action when their party calls the shots, and so on.[22] Further, when presented with policies that are vague or complex or unfamiliar, knowing that one's favored

party is behind the policy goes a long way in helping people to make quick judgments about whether they think the policy is a good idea.[23]

In these ways, we don't doubt that preferring a party and giving oneself an ideological label exert some causal influence on political opinions. A key question, though, is what causes the party preferences and ideological labels in the first place. On this question, our view is that it probably has a lot to do with people's preexisting positions on many of the central policy fights that we examine in this book.

For example, someone might be drawn to the Republican party primarily because of its stances on tax-and-spend policies, and then, once there, might be more likely to support fellow coalition members by providing answers to questions about other issues the person doesn't care or know as much about in ways that lean more to the right than the answers might otherwise. But, in this example, the party affiliation itself was an effect (rather than a cause) of the person's views on another set of issues (i.e., tax-and-spend policies).

All this causal presumption and DERPish question begging might be intellectually harmless if researchers simply pointed to these kinds of correlations and said, You know, these sure are big correlations. Fine. But they go further, frequently, and say, And other things that are not so big (like demographic features) are basically irrelevant. This is like noting a really big correlation between the height of identical twins and then saying: Taller twins are taller *because* they have taller twins, and, now that we know that, we can ignore the less interesting fact that taller twins *also have taller parents*.

Our preference is to largely ignore DERPish and other causally presumptuous "higher-level" variables, even though they are among the usual suspects political researchers turn to in accounting for policy opinion differences. Given that we're trying to understand the sources of diverse opinions on various well-known policy fights, we don't want to rely on items that often have big *correlations* with policy views, but are arguably not big *causes* of the kinds of commonly discussed policy views we examine in this book.[24]

Instead, we favor collections of demographic variables that offer a more secure basis on which to propose (in a noncircular way) *why* things turn out the way they do. Again, it's typically the case with demographic features (such as race, gender, education, sexual orientation, income,

etc.) that one can make pretty plausible guesses that correlations with political opinions really do involve causation flowing (through various direct and indirect routes) from demographics to politics. To echo our earlier comments, no one would entertain the notion that being opposed to income redistribution could turn racial minorities with lower incomes into rich, white men; when we find that rich, white men are especially likely to have conservative views on income redistribution, then, it's pretty unproblematic to conclude that there's something about the rich, white maleness that's somehow doing the causing (again, through various direct and indirect routes).

Further, there's no real DERP Syndrome problem when it comes to demographic correlates of political issue opinions. For example, when we find atheists strongly opposing discrimination against atheists, it might be *obvious* why they would do that—it's out of self-defense—but it's not DERPish. We're not asking people whether they favor policies reducing discrimination against atheists and using that to "explain" why they favor policies reducing discrimination against atheists. We're looking at whether their real-life interests are advanced by reducing such discrimination (whether they would admit this or not), and pointing out something that, weirdly, many political discussions simply ignore: It turns out that lots of people who oppose discrimination against atheists are the kinds of people whose lives would be worse off if other people discriminated against atheists.

We're looking for where the rubber of policy opinions meets the road of everyday life. We don't view people as fundamentally philosophical but as social animals driven by practical concerns. When we clear away the questionable variables and just look for connections between lives and policy views—a project that dominates most of the later chapters in this book—we will find them.

Where We're Headed

Our main goals in the pages that follow are to understand how everyday interests drive public opinion when it comes to some widely debated issues, how members of different demographic groups pick and choose mixtures of liberal and conservative views across these different issues,

and how members of these different groups with their idiosyncratic positions end up favoring one political party or the other. By the end we'll be engaged in a pretty sophisticated political exercise, dividing a quirky public into a number of coherent groups with complex contrasts in their political opinions. But the core themes in this cacophony are really rather simple. When we take it one note at a time, the melodies won't be hard to spot.

We've divided the book into four parts, covering political minds, political issues, political coalitions, and political challenges. In the remainder of this first part, on political minds, we look at some key ways in which psychological research sheds light on how people arrive at and defend their political positions. Chapter 2 addresses the question of what it means for something to advance a person's interests. The big lesson here is that the academic view of "self-interest" often sees things through a too narrow economic lens, as though most of what people care about comes down to immediate monetary payoffs. We widen this view by using the latest theory and research to consider other fundamental social goals (including those involving social status and sex lives) and stress how people's everyday goals involve family members, friends, and wider social networks.

Chapter 3 uses psychological research to explain the surprising ways in which human minds divide up their many jobs. A key conclusion of this research is that, while people often pursue their interests, part of this pursuit occurs through self-deceptive efforts to portray one's own preferences and actions as not so much about one's interests, but about one's competent and generous character. Human minds engage in ongoing spin control, with consciousness being generally clueless about the nature of the game. This division of labor helps explain, for example, why people in political disagreements tend to see themselves and their allies as reasonable and kind while seeing their opponents as stupid, greedy, and mean. One result, as with the reactions to Romney's postelection conference call, is that it becomes *insulting* to say accurate but not-nice-sounding things about other people's motives, the sorts of things people tend only to point out about their opponents rather than themselves. Our discussion here relies on a broad range of psychological material, including a book by one of your authors, Kurzban, *Why Everyone (Else)*

Is a Hypocrite (a book that, without a hint of self-interest, of course, we recommend highly).

In part II, we move to political issues. Chapter 4 focuses on issues relating to premarital sex, pornography, abortion, birth control, and marijuana legalization. This chapter draws heavily from some of the major threads in our own research efforts over the last decade or so, which have focused on people's sexual and reproductive lives, the competing interests that arise from different lifestyles, the competitive nature of moral conflict, and how these themes explain people's positions on issues like abortion and marijuana legalization. Our studies focus on the underlying strategic interests at work in moral conflict over lifestyles. What look to others like "cultural" or "religious" issues look to us like the manifestation of interests, albeit cleverly disguised.

In chapter 5, we move to a different set of issues, those involving group-based policies (relating to same-sex marriage, school prayer, immigration, affirmative action, and others). We examine the ways in which these kinds of fights don't just pit a minority group against a majority group, but involve wider issues over "meritocracy" and over what kinds of factors should matter in determining social advantages.

In chapter 6, we turn to our third and final set of issues, those relating to income redistribution and spending on entitlements and social safety nets. Here, most people have a pretty good sense that poorer people tend to be more liberal on these issues and wealthier people more conservative. We expand on this theme, looking at other ways in which demographic features relate to differing interests.

In short, part II of the book provides the demographic building blocks and the interest-based rationales behind them. We'll rely mostly on American data, but we'll see in broad strokes that the basic connections between demographic features and specific policy areas hold up worldwide.

With the building blocks in place, in part III, on political coalitions, we'll see how complex amalgams of interests produce varieties of people with shades of political color well beyond Jon Stewart's bichromatic rainbow. We'll find distinct clusters of demographics and see how they tend to favor the Republican or Democratic coalitions. These demographic groups, while distinct, will not be arbitrary, but rather they will

follow a logic grounded in everyday interests across the different sets of issues we will have explored in earlier chapters. In this way, part II will provide the building blocks for the analysis we construct in part III.

In part IV, we'll wrap up, exploring how far an interest-based perspective can take us while acknowledging that it can't take us the entire way. To be clear, we don't want to oversell our perspective. We think we can shed substantial new light on diverse political positions, but any such explanation of politics is limited because people are incredibly complex. For every two or three people who look typical in some facet of their issues opinions, there's probably one who doesn't. We are engaged in social science, not biography. We deal in generalities, typicalities, and averages, and there are always exceptions. Further, while we cover many important areas of modern political disagreement, there are some we've left out, and we'll discuss those.

This is a book on politics but it is not a political book. We're not trying to figure out how candidates can win elections. We're not trying to argue that people who share our own policy objectives are good and right while our opponents are bad and wrong. In this we depart from a well-worn path. Most writing on politics carries a clear underlying message about the righteousness of some set of policy positions that just happen to be strongly favored by the authors and the audience. Compared with such pleasing endeavors, our premise—that interests are key in understanding different positions on different issues—will probably feel like a kind of political attack to partisans on all sides. The best we can say is that we've worked hard to give a perspective that stands up to the facts.

In the end, the hardest part of understanding people's political opinions isn't the complexity of the material—this stuff is hard, but, taking it one step at a time, it's not *that* hard. Instead, the hardest part of understanding these opinions is *quieting one's own noisy biases long enough to hear the real themes being played*. We're going to make the case that minds are built for results, to advance their own everyday interests. But part of people's results-oriented agenda involves making themselves and others on their side look good and making their opponents look bad. We argue that all sides are in an important sense doing the same thing—advancing competing interests—in a way that doesn't naturally lead

to one side looking better than the other. But minds are built to resist such accounts, to latch on to more satisfying alternatives that rescue the moral privilege of one's own positions.

Still, we're not saying that people shouldn't favor their own side in political competitions. It's what democracy is about, for better or for worse. Speaking for ourselves, for example, there's nothing about our analyses in this book that has changed who we, your authors, vote for—we have policy preferences typical of our demographic group and will continue to support candidates who represent our views.

In this book, we're scratching a different itch. Our intention is not to advocate, but to understand and explain political positions. Along the way, we'll needle our own policy friends as much as our own policy opponents. As a reader, one has to make choices—is it worth it to try to put aside one's own comforting stories (for a moment, anyway) and simply try to figure out what's going on, even if the resulting portrait isn't particularly flattering to anyone?

CHAPTER 2

Investigating Interests

Mitt Romney blamed his 2012 election loss on self-interested voting. Many leading figures in the academy, however, are, to say the least, skeptical of this kind of explanation:

> [S]elf-interest ordinarily does not have much effect on the mass public's political attitudes. —*David Sears and Carolyn Funk, professors (1990)*[1]

> Unless the material outcomes from a public policy or issue are very clear, very large, and very imminent, self-interest does not determine opinion or action. —*Charles Taber, professor (2003)*[2]

> The current scholarly consensus holds that self-interest is not a major determinant of issue attitudes or voting choices.
> —*Michael Lewis-Beck, William Jacoby, Helmut Norpoth, and Herbert Weisberg, professors (2008)*[3]

> Self-interest has no more than sporadic marginal effects on political views.
> —*Bryan Caplan, professor (2012)*[4]

> [S]elf-interest is a weak predictor of policy preferences.
> —*Jonathan Haidt, professor (2012)*[5]

These folks are very well-respected researchers at top universities who have written numerous influential articles and books on political opinions. They understand that they're saying something that would surprise most people, but it's their sincere view—Romney's analysis must be wrong because people don't typically prefer policies or candidates based on self-interest.

The self-interest-denying message hasn't generally impressed the chattering class. Commentators regularly claim that self-interest is kind of a big deal in politics:

> [A]s is so often the case with people who spend heavily on elections, [their] worldview does happen to coincide pretty neatly with the economic interests of the people who hold it. —*Ross Douthat, political pundit (2013)*[6]

> The sense of fairness is so often a moralised stalking horse for personal interest. —*Will Wilkinson, political pundit (2013)*[7]

> The traditional conservative anti-government economic agenda is getting less and less popular in large part because it appeals to the economic interests of a small minority of capital owners and high-income earners. —*Jonathan Chait, political pundit (2013)*[8]

> [H]uman beings are very good at convincing themselves of whatever their self-interest would have them believe. —*Ezra Klein, political pundit (2012)*[9]

So which is it? On the one hand, many influential columnists think that self-interest matters. A lot. On the other hand, a number of respected researchers confidently assert that self-interest isn't all that important, often without bothering to hedge their declaratives with the usual academic "mights," "coulds," and "suggests."

These views are so diametrically opposite that someone—really, many someones—must be wrong. We think we know who.

Self-Interest Is Dead, Long Live Self-Interest!

Consider an influential set of claims from the 1998 edition of *The Handbook of Social Psychology* from a chapter by political scientist Donald Kinder (another deservedly well-respected figure) reviewing findings on political opinions:

> For the self-interested citizen, then, the question is always and relentlessly, What's in it for me and my family—what's in it for me and mine now? Defined in this way, self-interest is surprisingly unimportant when it comes to predicting American public opinion. . . . Consider these examples. When faced with affirmative action, white and black Americans come to their views without calculating personal harms or benefits. The unemployed do not line up behind policies designed to alleviate economic distress. The medically indigent are no more likely to favor government health insurance

> than are the fully insured. Parents of children enrolled in public schools are generally no more supportive of government aid to education than are other citizens. . . . Women employed outside the home do not differ from homemakers in their support for policies intended to benefit women at work. On such diverse matters as racial busing for the purpose of school desegregation, antidrinking ordinances, mandatory college examinations, housing policy, bilingual education, compliance with laws, satisfaction with the resolution of legal disputes, gun control, and more, self-interest turns out to be quite unimportant. . . . American society is marked by huge differences in income, education, and wealth, but such differences generally do not give rise to corresponding differences in opinion.[10]

This take on the state of the art in political science has been highly influential in academic circles. The quote from Charles Taber above is from a discussion quoting Kinder at length. In his recent book, *The Righteous Mind*, Jonathan Haidt cites the Kinder article in summarizing the role of self-interest in political opinions. We quoted a bit of it earlier, but here's more context from Haidt: "Many political scientists used to assume that people vote selfishly, choosing the candidate or policy that will benefit them the most. But decades of research on public opinion have led to the conclusion that self-interest is a weak predictor of policy preferences."[11]

Five of Kinder's claims can be evaluated reasonably straightforwardly with the main source of data used in this book, the U.S. General Social Survey, which has measured public opinion on a wide range of topics going back to the early 1970s.

Affirmative Action. In 1994 the GSS asked whites whether they thought it was likely that they or anyone in their families would not get a job or promotion while an equally or less qualified African American received one instead. African Americans were asked the inverse question, whether they thought it was likely that they or anyone in their families would not get a job or promotion while an equally or less qualified white received one instead. The survey asked these respondents about their support for or opposition to preferences in hiring and promotion for African Americans.

Recall that Kinder's claim was that people take positions on affirmative action "without calculating personal harms or benefits." If that claim is right—if people's views don't track their perceptions of their interests—then whether one stands to gain or lose under affirmative action should have no effect on whether one is for it or against it.

However, in sharp contrast (we present fuller analyses of this issue and the others that follow in the Data Appendix for Chapter 2), we find that the biggest supporters of race-based affirmative action were African Americans who indicated that it is likely that they or a family member would lose a job or promotion to a white—62% supported it and only 22% strongly opposed it. The biggest opponents of race-based affirmative action were whites who indicated that it is likely that they or a family member would lose a job or promotion to an African American—only 8% supported it and 77% strongly opposed it.

Crucially, there were significant differences among African Americans and among whites based on whether they said that they or a family member was at risk. Among African Americans who did not perceive a risk of losing jobs to whites, support for race-based affirmative action dropped to 47% (compared to 62% of African Americans who did perceive the risk). Among whites who did not perceive a risk of losing jobs to African Americans, strong opposition to race-based affirmative action dropped to 65% (compared to 77% of whites who did perceive the risk).

Self-interest deniers might point to the fact that African Americans at lower risk are more likely to favor affirmative action than whites at lower risk as some kind of confirmation that there's *more* than self-interest at work in these opinions. We agree with this, in a way, as we'll describe as we get deeper into this chapter. But the claim at issue here is simply whether self-interest enters the picture at all.

One could quibble at the margins. Is it really "self"-interest to ask about risk to one's "family members" in addition to one's self, for example? (Still, Kinder started it; his formulation explicitly included "me and my family.") Also, it's true that these percentages don't allow us to infer without question that people are "calculating personal harms or benefits." But to the extent these numbers tell us anything, it's that people's own interests are, on average, clearly related to their stated positions.

Unemployment. The claim: "The unemployed do not line up behind policies designed to alleviate economic distress." On a GSS survey item asking whether it should be the government's responsibility to provide a decent standard of living for the unemployed, 74% of the unemployed think it should be, but only 46% of those working full-time agree. On a GSS survey item asking whether government spending on unemployment benefits should be increased, left the same, or decreased, 57% of the unemployed think it should be increased, but only 27% of those working full-time agree. The unemployed actually *do* "line up behind policies" that help the unemployed.

Government Health Insurance. The claim: "The medically indigent are no more likely to favor government health insurance than are the fully insured." A closely related GSS survey item asks whether the government should have a responsibility to help pay for doctors and hospital bills or whether people should take care of themselves. Among individuals in the bottom half of the income distribution who lack health insurance coverage, 65% lean to the government-responsibility side and 13% lean to the take-care-of-yourself side. Among individuals in the top half of the income distribution who have health insurance, 46% lean to the government-responsibility side and 19% lean to the take-care-of-yourself side. One might be surprised that the differences aren't greater than they are, but it's not the case that the uninsured poor are "no more likely" than others to favor a government role in health insurance.

School Funding. The claim: "Parents of children enrolled in public schools are generally no more supportive of government aid to education than are other citizens." The GSS doesn't ask questions that address precisely this claim, but we can come reasonably close. We can look at people whose children do or did attend public schools, on the one hand, and the childless and those with children who do or did attend private school, on the other hand, splitting both groups into younger and older adults, approximating those with children still in school versus those with grown children. Among these groups, the highest level of support for increased school spending comes from adults under fifty whose children exclusively attend/attended public schools—to the tune of about eight in ten supporting higher spending on public education. The lowest levels of support for increased school funding come from

older individuals, whether or not their (by now probably grown) children attended public school. Among these older folks, two-thirds support higher spending on education. Unlike the three cases above, these differences, while statistically significant, are not very big in practical terms, and especially unimpressive when we add the fact that almost three-quarters of younger people without children in public schools also support higher spending. These results, then, don't really provide an unequivocal answer one way or the other on the claim, especially given the use of the term "generally." Score this one as unclear.

Working Women. The claim: "Women employed outside the home do not differ from homemakers in their support for policies intended to benefit women at work." For this topic, we compared, on the one hand, women working full-time (whether married or not) with, on the other hand, women who report they are "keeping house" (to use the GSS's term) and are also married to full-time workers. For these two groups of women, we looked at two items: (1) views regarding employers hiring and promoting women, and (2) whether women should receive paid maternity leave when they have a baby. There were no significant differences between these groups on these items. Thus, we think the claim with respect to working women is supported by these data.

So, in the five cases in which we can relatively cleanly assess the claims with the GSS, only one—the one regarding working women—is true. The statement about education was unclear, but leaned toward being untrue. In the other three cases—affirmative action, unemployment, and health insurance—self-interest relates to people's positions in exactly the way Kinder's statements denied.

Bilingual Education and Gun Control. In additional areas—including bilingual education and gun control—Kinder suggested that self-interest is "quite unimportant," a suggestion whose accuracy depends on one's view of how big an effect would have to be before it graduated to being important.

On bilingual education, in fact, in the GSS data, the strongest support for eliminating the programs is among those who speak only English (24% want to eliminate; 24% are strongly opposed to eliminating), while the strongest opposition to eliminating bilingual education is among those who speak Spanish and English but no other language (13% want

to eliminate; 45% are strongly opposed to eliminating). We think these differences are large enough to be important, and certainly not small enough to be "quite unimportant."

On gun control, the GSS has included gun ownership and a range of gun-related policy views over the years. Typically, on policy items involving permits, background checks, and limiting semiautomatic or high-powered weapons to police or military, restrictions are supported by around 85% to 90% of people who do not own guns, but support for restrictions drops to the 50% to 70% range for gun owners. That is, there is typically around a 25-point gap between gun owners and non-owners, a gap that strikes us as plainly important.

Socioeconomic Status. Finally, Kinder made the following broad claim about political views: "American society is marked by huge differences in income, education, and wealth, but such differences generally do not give rise to corresponding differences in opinion." We'll investigate the relationships among education, income, and political opinions at length in the pages to come, but for now let's take a look at two examples of issues that are central matters of difference between Democrats and Republicans on which one might expect people with different income levels to have different opinions. We'll compare those in the bottom 20% of family income, the middle 20%, and the top 10% (as with all these issues, we present the full data in the appendixes).

On the question of whether the government should be taking steps to reduce income disparities, 57% of the poorest group lean left of center in their responses, dropping to 49% of those in the middle, and dropping substantially to only 30% of the wealthiest group. A recent study looking at this GSS item went further, using data from the same individuals over time. The finding was that when people experience unemployment or a loss in income, their views on reducing income disparities become significantly more liberal than they were before the unemployment or income loss, providing powerful evidence that there really is a causal connection leading from one's economic circumstances to one's political views on redistribution.[12]

On the related question of whether the government should be taking action to help the poor or whether the poor should help themselves, lots of people (reasonably, we think, given how the question is worded) land

in the middle, agreeing with both positions. But, still, more than twice as many of the richest Americans (39%) than the poorest Americans (17%) head to the right on this question; and more than twice as many of the poorest Americans (40%) than the richest Americans (17%) head to the left on this question. Americans in the middle of the income distribution are practically evenly split on this item.

So, for questions like these—questions that relate directly to income redistribution—does income "give rise to corresponding differences in opinion"? It sure looks that way to us.

The evidence that people's policy views really do track their interests raises the question of how the self-interest-denying meme got started in the first place. Kinder's summary, after all, isn't based on nothing, but in fact relies on a large number of studies by several researchers over many years. Nonetheless, we have major concerns about these studies. We've provided what we believe to be a key piece of the puzzle at the end of the Data Appendix for Chapter 2, but our argument is rather technical and, to many, we predict, not particularly interesting (it's a thrilling tale of how the use of DERPish and other noncausal variables as predictors in multiple regressions leads to plainly misleading coefficients for both noncausal and causal variables). For those uninterested in such academic Urkel-jerking, our summary is this: The self-interest-denying claims from academics are based on complex effects from complex studies with questionable assumptions, but the summaries of these studies make it sound like these are simple conclusions from simple studies. When one strips out the complexity and just looks at the simple statements, as we did above, the simple statements are often untrue.

In sum, our fact-checking indicates that self-interest often plays an important and substantial role in key areas of policy opinions, and yet strongly worded self-interest denials regularly pop up. One example is the well-known book, *What's the Matter with Kansas?*, by journalist Thomas Frank. The central claim in Frank's book is that whites with lower incomes in red states are ignoring their economic interests by voting Republican. Several political scientists have since debunked Frank's claim,[13] including a thorough treatment in *Red State, Blue State, Rich State, Poor State*, by Andrew Gelman and colleagues. Gelman finds that while wealthier states often have more Democratic voters, richer people

within any given state are more likely to vote Republican. It's simply not the case that people (even Kansans) generally ignore income in choosing political parties, though income is not the only thing that matters. Frank's is a comforting tale for big-city liberals who want to think that middle-American conservatives are suckers; but, sadly perhaps, it just ain't so (or, at least, it ain't so in the way that Frank claims it is).

Reports of the death of self-interest have been greatly exaggerated. We don't want to replace one extreme with another by saying that some narrowly defined version of self-interest is all that matters—to be clear, we're not saying that. Indeed, the rest of this chapter examines some of the complexities and widens the typical view.

The Nature of Interests

What do people mean when they say that something is in a person's interests? Mainly, it's that something advances a person toward getting what they want. It's more complex than this, of course, in no small part because people want many things, some of which are mutually exclusive. A heroin addict might want to get more heroin, and people wouldn't normally say that doing so would be in their interests. Why not? Because people think that getting more heroin will interfere with the person achieving their (presumed) long-term goals—looking after their own health and safety, success at a job, developing and maintaining relationships with friends and partners, taking care of their children, and so on. People can have goals, after all, that conflict.

In a related way, one often hears that something would be in someone's interests even though they might not know it themselves—it's in people's interests to eat less trans fats, it's in teenagers' interests to wait to have children, and so on. People are comfortable saying what's in someone else's best interests because they assume that people share some very basic goals. People should eat less trans fats because most people want to be healthier. Teenagers should wait to have children because having children too early often leads to being poorer over one's lifetime, something few people presumably want.

What people usually mean by something being in a person's interests, then, is that it advances them toward getting what they want overall, but such claims always rest on a set of background assumptions regarding what people usually want and how to prioritize those various goals when they conflict. It's not an airtight way to think about it, but for many purposes it's close enough.

So what, then, do people want? To figure this out, we start with our friend and colleague Doug Kenrick. Kenrick has been an influential researcher for decades, and in recent years he has been usefully integrating social psychology, evolutionary psychology, cognitive science, dynamical systems theory, and behavioral economics. These days he's been combining his academic efforts with popular books bringing social science to the masses, including *Sex, Murder, and the Meaning of Life* and *The Rational Animal* (coauthored with Vlad Griskevicius).

Kenrick and his colleagues maintain that people are trying to put together lives that advance fundamental, everyday motives, including satisfying immediate physiological needs (breathing, eating, drinking, finding shelter, etc.), defending themselves and those they value, establishing social ties, gaining and maintaining social status and esteem, attracting and retaining mates, and parenting. People are not abstract beings, after all, but social animals.

Economic goals don't appear explicitly on Kenrick's list, but are interwoven in various ways. Money isn't viewed as a fundamental motive in itself, but as something useful to satisfying various fundamental motives—securing food, shelter, health care, and protection; gaining and maintaining social status, alliances, and mating relationships; providing advantages for one's children and other family members. Economists are sometimes accused of believing that humans mostly care about economic outcomes, but most modern economists don't believe this. The standard views in economics see people as maximizing their *preferences*, whatever these happen to be. These preferences can include having more money, but can also include gaining prestige, or having sex, or having one's children fulfill their own preferences, or a range of other goals.[14]

There are further goals that derive from the high-level goals. Some key subgoals relate to managing how one is thought of by others. In

establishing social ties, for example, people seek to come across as reliable, predictable, competent, consistent, admired, nice, powerful, reasonable, likable, generous souls—just the sort of people, that is, that other people might rationally view as someone who would be a good friend to have.

The list of fundamental motives is relatively straightforward, but matters become more complex because motives and the priorities among them differ across individuals, across sexes, across stages of life, across cultures, and across situations. To take a simple example, young men often do dangerous things (football, skateboarding, motocross, fighting) in substantial part—whether they know it or not—to gain attention from young women. It's not that they stop caring about their safety, but that, for some individuals in some situations, safety motives are trumped by mating motives.[15]

Furthermore, motivation is dynamic, frequently sensitive to context. For instance, Kenrick and his colleagues have run clever experiments regarding the widely discussed tendency toward loss aversion—where people fear losses more than they desire equal-sized gains. The studies show that, in fact, loss aversion depends on what motives are salient at the time. Get people thinking about their safety, and they show typical loss aversion patterns. Get young men thinking about hooking up with young women, however, and their loss aversion disappears as they seek to gain the kinds of things (money, status) that might be attractive to women.[16]

Our view of political interests draws heavily from the work of researchers analyzing how people's lives and minds reflect humans-as-social-creatures kinds of goals. These goals can be complex, contradictory, and overlapping, they can involve short-term or long-term agendas, they can differ between individuals, and they can differ within the same individual over time.

Contrast this somewhat catholic view with typical definitions of "self-interest" from political science, which tend to be very narrow. Self-interest, by the usual standards, is invoked only when a person gets some material gain now or soon. A typical definition involves "relatively short-term tangible benefits."[17] Getting some money today is in a person's self-interest, but—somewhat oddly—entering into an agreement

to get some money a few years from now is not. Gaining social status isn't in a person's self-interest—again, on many traditional definitions—because it's not "material" or "tangible," despite the fact that status usually translates in the real world into more control over the levers of power that distribute resources over time.

By the restrictive definitions, getting a college education is not in a person's self-interest because it leads to immediate loss of income (while in college) in exchange for long-term gain. To take another example—again confounding most people's intuitions—by the restrictive definitions, two single adults who want to marry but are legally prevented from doing so (e.g., because of laws against interracial marriage or against same-sex marriage) would not have their self-interests advanced by removing the legal barrier (self-interest is about money, not relationships).

The perversities that the standard definition introduces penetrate into any number of policy domains. On the restrictive definitions, being denied access to birth control is not against the self-interest of someone who wishes to be sexually active while avoiding pregnancy (it's not material in the short term). On the usual definition, wanting publicly funded unemployment insurance to be available is only in the self-interest of people currently unemployed, despite the fact that lots of other people might need it in the future. On the restrictive definitions, it's not against the self-interest of sexually active young women when others engage in moralistic "slut shaming." On the usual definition, it does not advance the self-interest of young minority men to eliminate racial profiling by the police.

We simply reject the restrictive definitions of "self-interest." In real life, people have agendas that involve more than the short term and more than just money. Viewing "self-interest" in such a limited, counterintuitive way strikes us as arbitrary. Instead, generally—and we concede somewhat less cleanly—we view self-interest as advancing any of a range of people's typical goals, whether directly involving material gain or not, whether involving immediate gain or something more subtle that advances someone's progress over the longer term.

Somewhat oddly, typical definitions of self-interest *do* include immediate material benefits to one's family members. (Recall Kinder's

formulation, which included "me and my family.") Even by the restrictive definitions, then, "self-interest" isn't really just about one's self. We agree with this expansion, primarily because it captures something fundamental about human life—people typically care deeply about outcomes for close family members, particularly their children. Indeed, evolutionary biology, on Richard Dawkins's famous "selfish gene" frame, views an organism as a machine that advances the interests of its own genes, genes that are shared, to one degree or another, by parents and children, siblings, nephews and uncles, grandparents and grandchildren.[18]

For all these reasons, we think it's probably best to jettison the term "self-interest" altogether. To replace it, we'll borrow from evolutionary biologists, who use the term "fitness" to describe reproductive success, which is evolution's bottom line. When evolutionary biologists want to talk about the combined gene-level reproductive success of a person and that person's relatives, they refer to "inclusive fitness." So, we'll refer to "inclusive interests." Something is in a person's "inclusive interests" when it advances their or their family members' everyday, typical goals.

But even this leaves out something important.

Life Is a Team Sport

There is no deeper truism in economics than the idea that people compete over scarce resources. Indeed, this is true not only for people, but for animals generally. Animals are built for competing. In the nonhuman world, they compete with one another for territory, food, and anything else that contributes to survival and reproductive success. Often they have built-in equipment for competition, like the large antlers of bucks used to compete with other bucks for access to does.

Humans don't have much by way of natural armaments, but two human traits stand out: big brains and big social groups. Relative to their relatives, humans have large, dense social networks and huge numbers of both negative and positive social interactions. People spend incredible portions of their time in close proximity—sometimes, these days, virtual proximity—to other people. Indeed, humans cooperate with one

another arguably more than almost any other species, except maybe some kinds of insects.[19] People cooperate with one another on many scales across many domains, from division of labor within families to modern large-scale military enterprises.

The fact that people are so social means that they can advance their interests not only by making use of physical tools, but also by making use of social tools (i.e., their relationships with other people). There is one crucial difference. When someone uses a rock to beat on a rival, the rock is no better (or worse) off. Not so with social tools.

The fact that people use one another does not mean that the individuals who are being so used might not also stand to benefit. People use one another to reach goals they couldn't if they acted separately, goals whose benefits are typically shared to one degree or another. They rely on their social networks to help carry them through hard times. And when someone gains, it's often a gain for others in their social network as well.

Indeed, anthropologists have emphasized that a pervasive, even universal, feature of human societies is that people cooperate with one another to produce goods and services that benefit the group, or at least some subsection of it. Such activities range from hunting in small-scale societies—in which meat is frequently shared broadly among members of the larger community—to Wikipedia, a planetary outpouring of cooperative effort to benefit anyone with an Internet connection.

A related, if perhaps less encouraging, point is that psychologists have documented that humans reliably play favorites, disposed—to put it very roughly—toward helping those that are more like them rather than those who are less like them. The data from psychological experiments dating back several decades have suggested to some that nearly any feature, no matter how arbitrary or inconsequential, can motivate in-group favoritism. In classic early studies, subjects estimated the number of dots on a screen and were (randomly) informed that they were "over-estimators" or "under-estimators" of the number of dots. Assigning these (trivial, artificial) labels influenced subjects' subsequent choices of allocating rewards to other subjects, with people favoring those who were "like them" in terms of their style of estimation.[20]

In the real world, cooperative groups are formed and dissolve on an ad hoc basis all the time. People participate in pickup games of soccer or basketball for a short period, dissolving at the end of an afternoon. The film industry illustrates a similar phenomenon, with groups of specialists—actors, directors, technicians—working cooperatively on a particular project, and more or less disbanding when the task is complete.[21] And people are choosy about the groups they join and stay members of. In laboratory experiments in behavioral economics, people often exit groups that are not meeting their standards of being sufficiently cooperative.[22]

The point is that one's interests are often enhanced by advances generally among one's social network. Life is competitive, not just for individuals and families but for various, wider, overlapping social circles as well. Life is a team sport, and we're all on several teams. The benefits spill over; the harms trickle through.

And so our earlier notion of "inclusive interests" needs to be expanded further. People's everyday, real-life endeavors are enhanced by various kinds of material and nonmaterial gains, over shorter-term and longer-term horizons, received by themselves, their family members, and their friends, allies, and social networks.[23]

An Interest by Any Other Name

Self-interest deniers are often quick to point out that while *self*-interest doesn't really matter, *group* interests matter quite a bit when it comes to political issues. Kinder puts it this way: "In matters of public opinion, citizens seem to be asking themselves not 'What's in it for me?' but rather 'What's in it for my group?' "[24]

Our notion of inclusive interests skates over it, but the self/group distinction has always been pretty messy. To begin with, we've noted that typical definitions of self-interest nonetheless explicitly include a group—family members.

But the bigger problem is that group interests, as typically conceived, overlap with the interests of individual members of the group. Groups,

after all, are made up of individuals. Take Kinder's discussion of groups, for example. He points to large average differences between whites and African Americans on issues relating to racial discrimination and safety-net programs and in party affiliations. There is no doubt that these differences exist. The issue is what to make of them.

When a particular African American supports policies that attenuate the negative effects of racial discrimination, sure, those policies are good for other African Americans. Should the individual's support for the policies be understood as advancing the interests of the person (and their family), and helping other African Americans as a side effect? Or should support for the policies be understood as advancing the interests of other African Americans, helping the self (and kin) as a side effect? Or some combination of both?

It's certainly not obvious, to us anyway, that supporting policies in this way is properly described as looking out for one's group as opposed to looking out for one's self and one's family. When one widens the circle to social allies, taking account of the common sharing of benefits among them, the problem is compounded. If I'm an African American with a social network consisting mostly of other African Americans, and if having more African Americans hired and promoted within companies would place more people in my social network in positions to control hiring and promoting decisions themselves, and if that might help me and my family members get hired and promoted down the road, then it becomes something of a mess to try to unravel what the "self" and "group" interests are.

Psychologist Jonathan Haidt in his book, *The Righteous Mind*, takes things further than most social scientists and views advancing group interests as a kind of self-sacrifice. When it comes to politics, he views people as choosing a team and transcending their own interests in favor of group interests.[25] We resist this move as applied to most real-world political issues. If most African Americans support policies that attenuate the negative effects of racial discrimination, and most African Americans benefit from these policies, and few African Americans are harmed by these policies, then we don't see why supporting one's group would be self-sacrificial. We view most examples of things that advance

"groups" as basically equivalent to things that advance the individual interests of lots of members of those groups.[26]

In some cases self-interest and group interests might genuinely diverge. An obvious example would be wealthy African Americans and income redistribution. African Americans have, on average, lower incomes and lower income social networks and might therefore benefit from more robust income redistribution. But the immediate individual interests of wealthy African Americans pull the other way. What do the data show? As we'll discuss in chapter 6, average views on income redistribution are predicted by a mixture of race, income, and a few other factors. Among those most opposed to government income redistribution are, unsurprisingly, wealthy whites. Among those who most support income redistribution are poorer and middle-income African Americans. Wealthy African Americans are in the middle—neither as routinely opposed as wealthy whites nor as routinely supportive as poorer African Americans.

Such patterns would seem to us to undermine Haidt's view that people typically sacrifice their own interests to those of their salient groups. We hasten to add that such patterns similarly don't support the view that people solely care about immediate individual interests. Instead, these patterns suggest a messier formula, one that combines self-interest and group interests into something more like: What's in it for me, my family, my friends, my allies, and my wider social network? This combination is what we're calling "inclusive interests."

From our perspective, it's not surprising that politicians routinely talk about "you and your family," or that circumstances that threaten people's physical safety (like the attacks of 9/11 or large hurricanes) serve as such potent motivators of political will, or that issues relating to sex and reproduction (like abortion and birth control) can for some people in some circumstances become as or more important than issues relating to income redistribution, or that politics can often appear to be as much about people's own groups as their own selves.

In later chapters, we'll take a close look at how particular demographic features relate to differences in people's inclusive interests with respect to particular policy disputes. First, however, we'll address a lingering and important concern. If people are driven by their interests, why is it that,

when asked why they have the policy preferences they have, people hardly ever say that it's because it's in their interests? Instead, people often claim that they, themselves, are largely magnanimous, interest-free creatures, while viewing their opponents as, at best, creatures of self-interest (and, at worst, evil people actively trying to sabotage society). If interests so obviously matter, why won't people just admit it?

CHAPTER 3

Machiavellian Minds

> So convenient a thing it is to be a *Reasonable Creature*, since it enables one to find or make a reason for every thing one has a mind to do.
>
> —*The Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin*

Suppose a journalist wanted to know why Big Regional Bank (BRB) sponsored the Local International Arts Festival. To find out, the journalist might ask BRB's corporate office. The reply would probably come from its public relations department and say something about BRB's views on the importance of being a good corporate citizen and the role that the arts play in the quality of life of the region's citizens—especially the children. *BRB is proud to be a part of this life-affirming educational and cultural event* . . . and so on.

Suppose a journalist wanted to know why a presidential administration was pushing for increased government support for medical payments for seniors. To find out, the journalist might ask the administration's press office, which would probably say something about the president's views on the importance of the nation's health and our obligations to seniors. *The president believes it is an important part of who we are as a nation that we look out for those who worked hard and played by the rules and now seek to retire with dignity* . . . and so on.

Most observers of business and politics these days are pretty savvy and cynical, and are unlikely to confuse the spin that banks and presidential administrations put on their actions with the truth of the matter. Public statements come from the part of the organization that handles public relations, and such statements often have little or nothing to do

with the real reasons that the bank sponsored the event or the administration is trying to expand payments to seniors. Any journalist who reported these press-office statements as simple facts about the underlying motives would be viewed as hopelessly naïve at best and on the take at worst.

Complex organizations such as large businesses and presidential administrations generally have a set of principal goals. For businesses, it's typically maximizing profits or shareholder value. For presidential administrations, it's typically advancing the ability of the administration and its party to win further elections and filling the policy gift baskets of their donors, activists, and voters.

For both businesses and administrations, the organization's success depends in part on maintaining a particular image. Businesses seek to attract customers with brand images emphasizing things such as reliability, value, and an association with excellent basketball players; many firms also cultivate a reputation for being nice, friendly, a generous supporter of communities and children, a good neighbor, and so on. Administrations seek to advance their policy objectives and attract voters with images of competency, strength, compassion, and love for all things American, from apple pie to Yellowstone.

Businesses and administrations, then, have a set of principal objectives that are about advancing the interests of themselves and their stakeholders. However, *as part of advancing those objectives*, they must engage in public relations that cover up the fact that the bases for their decisions have to do with advancing their principal interests, replacing the real motives with nice-sounding stories. In short, they have to engage in "spin," the polite way of saying they have to lie—a lot.

Firms and administrations organize themselves in ways that enhance their ability to spin. One way they do this is simply to limit who actually knows the truth of the matter: important decisions are generally made behind closed doors—whether in top-floor board rooms or hermetically sealed situation rooms—out of view of the prying press and the public. Such meetings aren't leak-proof—let alone subpoena-proof—but, under the usual circumstances, outsiders can't easily find out the details of the decision-making process that gave rise to a particular choice.

In other walled-off spaces are dedicated public relations staffs. These staffs often don't care *why* the decision-makers come to the decisions they do in their top-floor board rooms or hermetically sealed situation rooms. The jobs of public relations departments are made easier by the fact that the same decision might, plausibly, have been motivated by a number of different reasons.[1] Disconnected from the deliberations of decision-makers, public relations departments are free to pick and choose among a range of motives, selecting or inventing ones that work best for public consumption.

And, so, when Big Regional Bank decided to sponsor the Local International Arts Festival, the decision was probably made by the bank's executives and board of directors, who based their decision on a cost/benefit analysis, a calculation regarding how much increased business they would get from the exposure the sponsorship provides. And when an administration decided to push for expanded funding for seniors' medical care, the decision was probably made in consultation with pollsters and key industries and donor groups, with a keen eye on the potential effect on future elections and fund-raising.

But then the public relations team does its job. In separate offices, it crafts its messages with a focus on manipulating public perception in favor of the organization. For the bank, the decision is presented not as one driven by profit maximization, but instead by a desire to promote the good of local communities . . . especially the children. For the administration, the decision is presented not as one driven by electoral and fund-raising advantages, but instead by widely shared concern for the well-being of grandparents. The public relations office doesn't get to set policy, but it does come up with ways to defend it. Public statements, in the end, have little to do with accurately describing why organizations do the things they do; in fact, public relations efforts actively seek to throw the public off the real trail.

In some cases, such messages are relayed to the public by spokespersons with minimal knowledge of how the decision was actually made and who perhaps had no direct role even in crafting the public relations story. At the extremes, they are essentially actors on a stage, delivering messages that are made all the more earnest by the spokespersons' own ignorance of the underlying, uglier, strategic facts. The blissful igno-

rance of the talking head is the icing on the cake of effective spin control. By virtue of their ignorance, spokespersons can tell the *organization's* lies without, themselves, lying. True, they are passing on misleading information; but they themselves remain willfully innocent of the facts.

There is no "I" in "Mind" (Well, there is, but . . .)

Advances in research in psychology over the last half century suggest that the human mind resembles large businesses and administrations: it consists of a large number of specialized systems, each with their own jobs, with information flows being limited among the different departments.[2] Human minds are complex bureaucracies.

Even people unfamiliar with much contemporary psychology probably know a little about some of the specialized systems of the mind. For example, there are systems whose job is narrowly focused on seeing. Starting with the photoreceptors in the retina and leading ultimately to dedicated groups of neurons in the brain, the cells of the visual system carry out the narrow but difficult task of building an image of the world.[3] There are also specialized systems for tasks such as understanding and producing language, moving the body's limbs, storing information about events that have occurred, and so on.[4] These systems are, loosely, analogous to a company's billing and collections department or payroll department or shipping department—departments that help the organization collect the information it needs and execute the decisions it makes.

Our concern here is not with these nuts-and-bolts systems, but rather with another way that the organization of the human mind parallels the organization of large corporations or administrations: the division of labor between decision-making and public relations. Human minds can be thought of as containing Boards of Directors engaged in high-level agenda setting in back rooms, Public Relations Departments that craft effective spin, and Spokespersons that have no real sense that they're telling made-up stories concocted by their Public Relations Departments.

A classic study from the literature in psychology illustrates the basic point. Richard Nisbett and Timothy Wilson conducted an experiment

in which they laid out four pairs of panty hose and people had to say which pair they liked best, as one might be asked to do in a traditional marketing survey.[5] In this case, however, there was a twist: all four pairs of panty hose were identical. Because they were all identical, the experimenters could be sure that people weren't basing their decisions on some property of the panty hose, such as their color or their texture.

By and large, people chose the panty hose laid out on their right. That is, the cause of people's decisions was the *position* of the panty hose, not the *properties* of the panty hose. When asked to explain their choice, however, people did not say it was because of where their chosen item was on the display. Rather, they said they chose based on some (imagined) property that differentiated their selected pair from the others.

The claim that Nisbett and Wilson made was emphatically not that the people who participated were lying, intentionally deceiving the experimenters. The claim was that subjects literally did not know—have conscious awareness of—the reason for their choice. The Board of Directors of the mind did its job and picked one of the objects from the display, but didn't pass on the reason for its choice to the Public Relations Department of the mind. The Public Relations Department then did its job and made up a reason for the choice that was consistent with the story it likes to tell: *When I say something is preferable to other things, I don't do so irrationally or at random but, rather, I do so based on the fact that my chosen thing really does have better qualities.* Then the Spokesperson did its job, earnestly believed that the Public Relations Department's story was the actual source of the Board's decision, and made the case publicly, sincerely, and with a straight face.

Research over the last several decades suggests that people's inability to report the actual reasons that guide their decisions is by no means limited to panty hose choices, but is, in fact, pervasive. Several recent books—including *Blink* by Malcolm Gladwell and the somewhat less well-known *Strangers to Ourselves* by Timothy Wilson—document the large number of domains in which people lack conscious awareness of the reasons behind their choices.

Most of people's decisions, of course, are not as trivial as in the panty hose example. Usually, as we discussed in chapter 2, people, like big corporations and presidential administrations, have a set of principal

objectives—trying to advance a number of everyday goals. And, like corporations and administrations, people need to maintain positive public images that are typically most effective when stories are spun to disguise these principal objectives.

To craft its public image, the mind combines tactics from Dale Carnegie's *How to Win Friends and Influence People* with Niccolò Machiavelli's *The Prince*. A person needs to appear to be a valuable asset: competent, smart, reasonable, talented, powerful, connected, wise. Such traits imply that a person can be of use to others. But a person also needs to appear *not* to be too self-interested. Others want allies who are altruistic and generous, genuinely invested in the interests of their confederates rather than in their own narrow interests.

In short, in the service of winning friends and influencing people (something that advances a person's own interests), the person encourages others to believe things about the person that are in *others'* own interests—that the person is a useful ally because of the person's competence, and also that the person is a useful ally because the person cares about others and is not really governed by concerns over the person's own interests. Minds pull off these Herculean feats of spin control the same way complex businesses and administrations do it—by sequestering the sources of their preferences and decisions away from their Public Relations Departments and, ultimately, their Spokespersons (i.e., their conscious minds). The Public Relations Department feeds the Spokesperson inaccurate but highly useful stories about how the Board's desires and actions really are simple reflections of competence and generosity.

The beauty of this compartmentalization is that this dynamic plays out unconsciously. Lies, after all, can be detected. But the conscious mind doesn't have to lie to tell the story that the underlying mental bureaucracy wants told. Instead, the conscious mind is simply fed made-up stories, believes them, and makes the case publicly. People's conscious Spokespersons usually literally don't know the true origin of their minds' own positions, and so have no qualms about pressing the only stories they're given, the nice-sounding stories their Public Relations Departments make up.

For instance, suppose we give a set of experimental subjects a test of "social intelligence"—a pleasantly ambiguous term—and tell some of

them that their scores were on the high side and others that their scores were on the low side. Further, suppose the scores are actually assigned at random, having nothing to do with their actual test performance. We then ask the subjects why they think they got their impressive or unimpressive score. When researchers conduct these kinds of studies, subjects who are told they got a high score generally say that the result has to do with their inherent competence: their high social intelligence. But those who are told their scores are low generally resist explanations that call their competence into question—they say it has to do with bad luck. This is a very general pattern observed in psychological research: people often take credit for having brought about good outcomes, and blame others, chance, fate, or the gods for bad outcomes.[6]

In one version of this study, researchers went a step further and wired up some subjects to a lie detector that subjects believed accurately measured whether or not they were telling the truth.[7] One might have thought that when so wired up subjects would be slower to take credit for good scores and faster to admit blame for bad ones. Not at all. The results with and without the lie detector showed the same bias toward taking credit for the good score and denying responsibility for the bad one. The point is that there is no lie to detect—the Spokespersons of the mind are quite sincere in their belief in the accuracy of the Public Relations Departments' stories.

Thinking of the mind as a kind of modern organization with a Board of Directors, a Public Relations Department, and a Spokesperson helps explain the discrepancies between what people do and what people say about what they do. Still, there is an important way in which the analogy between corporations and administrations on the one hand, and minds on the other, does not hold up. In particular, corporations have CEOs; administrations have heads of government. There might well be no equivalent in the mind. The part people typically think of as their CEO—the conscious mind—is in fact just a bit player, a Spokesperson eager to stay on script but not actually in charge of much.

Consider the classic work of Benjamin Libet. He would have a subject sit in front of a clock and move their hand at a moment of their choosing. Subjects then reported the exact second they had decided to move their hand. While subjects were doing this, the electrical activity in their

brain was being monitored, giving Libet an accurate measurement of when the decision was actually made (by monitoring the activity in the motor systems that execute such decisions). Though moving the hand feels like a "conscious" decision, people reported having made the decision to move their hand *after* the brain activity began, strongly suggesting that the decision was made before the subject was aware of having made it.[8] In other words, the conscious Spokesperson didn't learn of the decision until after it was made by some other part of the mental bureaucracy.

Other particularly striking evidence comes from work with epileptic patients. Epilepsy can act as a kind of uncontrolled electrical storm in the brain, starting off in one area and then quickly spreading across connected areas. In some patients, one procedure used to help control the effects is to sever the bundle of connections between the two halves of the brain; that way, when a storm arises in one half of the brain, it won't spread to the other half. In these split-brain patients, then, there's no direct communication between the two halves of the brain.

Michael Gazzaniga has used the unusual cases of split-brain patients to cast further light on the Public Relations Departments and Spokespersons in human brains (systems he calls the "left-hemisphere interpreter").[9] In one setup, Gazzaniga and colleagues had split-brain patients look at a screen and told them to follow any command presented on the screen. The researchers quickly flashed the word "laugh" on the left-hand side. Because of the way the nervous system is organized, this information gets sent only to the right hemisphere of the brain. The right hemisphere interprets the command and complies—the person chuckles. The left hemisphere, at this point, knows that a chuckle just came from their own mouth, but doesn't know why—the "laugh" command only went to the right hemisphere.

What happens when Gazzaniga asks the patient—really, their language-using left hemisphere—why they just laughed? Does the left-hemisphere Spokesperson say "holy crap, that's weird; I have no idea why I just laughed"? Does it fret? Does it panic? Not at all. It takes things utterly in stride. "Oh," it says, without any hint of distress, "you guys are really something!" In other words, it passes along a more or less reasonable-sounding answer to the question of why the person laughed—because

other people in the room were being funny. It was the wrong answer in this case (really it had to do with the "laugh" command sent to the right hemisphere), but it's the kind of answer that in most situations would have been perfectly plausible.

In such cases the Spokesperson doesn't miss a beat because the Public Relations Department is doing what it always does, what it's designed to do—providing reasonable-sounding interpretations of what a person does despite the fact that the Public Relations Department is often ignorant about the underlying causes. It makes stuff up. That's what it's there for.

As with the case of Libet's clock-watchers, the Spokespersons in Gazzaniga's studies are happy to take credit for decisions made elsewhere in the neural bureaucracy. The Spokespersons have a funny feature not found in corporations or administrations—they believe they are the CEO/President, calling the shots. But it's largely an illusion.

Emotional Intelligence

Instead of a single CEO of the mind, there is something more like a Board of Directors, a collection of systems responsible for setting the agenda and determining which outcomes count as good ones that should be pursued and bad ones that should be avoided. These systems are, speaking very roughly, the emotional systems that motivate behavior and produce so-called gut feelings or intuitive reactions.

In the past, emotions were seen as in conflict with reason. Modern psychology takes a very different view. These days, many, perhaps most, psychologists don't view emotions and reason as fundamentally different from each other. Instead, they view minds as engaged in various kinds of information processing, some of which is faster and more automatic and some of which is slower and more deliberative. Behavior comes from a combination of systems using a mix of processing styles. Daniel Kahneman's *Thinking, Fast and Slow* is an extended look at how modern psychologists approach emotion and cognition; Malcolm Gladwell's *Blink* is something of a catalog of some striking cases, such as the

opening chapter about experts' ability to intuit that a piece of art is a forgery without being able to articulate how they know.

The large number of systems that together make up an individual mind need coordination and guidance; these systems need to know what's important at any given moment, what sorts of problems they should be focused on, and what sorts of outcomes are desirable. These tasks fall to the mind's motivational systems, what we're referring to as its Board of Directors.

A textbook definition of emotions these days (rephrased in the kind of language we're using in this book) runs something like this: An emotion is a commonly occurring, results-oriented reaction to some external event that serves to coordinate the systems in a person's brain and body (e.g., to focus attention on something important, to get lots of the brain's subsystems processing information about the situation at hand, to get one's muscles ready to act fast if needed), helping the person to interact with the world in ways that advance the person's goals.[10]

Consider an emotion such as anger. Someone does something that harms the interests of a person or the people that person cares about. The person gets angry. Systems in the person's mind that might have previously been focused on, say, getting something to eat, now get new marching orders: Focus on the object of the anger and figure out ways to fight back. Blood starts pumping away from the digestive system and toward the person's muscles, preparing the body for action. The person's face takes on a characteristically angry look, signaling in a quick and effective way to others around the person that there's a storm a-brewing, so they better either back off or get ready for business. The anger can then quickly go away if the person quickly gets what they want. As explained elegantly by Robert Frank in *Passions within Reason*, anger is an effective means of deterrence. If I get (visibly) angry when you have hurt me or are about to do so—if I get prepared and motivated to harm you—then you are less likely to hurt me in the future. Far from being irrational, then, emotions such as anger typically guide people toward useful outcomes.

Emotions often reflect the sorts of social goals we discussed in chapter 2—safety, health, mating, alliances, status, family, and so forth. Anger,

for example, is often a response to a threat to some aspect of one's inclusive interests. Someone threatens the safety of one's self, family, or friends. Someone steals one's property. Someone doesn't hold up their end of a bargain intended to be mutually beneficial. Someone is disrespectful, implying that one has low social status. Someone flirts with one's long-term romantic partner (or one's partner flirts back).

Other emotions have similar interpretations. Fear and anxiety focus mental resources to deal with potentially dangerous situations. Disgust keeps people away from pathogens and toxins. Familial love helps guide people in caring for and seeking care from people who have shared interests in one another's well-being. Sexual passion and romantic love get people to put up with outrageous levels of nonsense in the service of their mating goals. Envy focuses a person's attention on ways to even out status competitions that the person appears to be losing. Romantic jealousy reduces the chance of a person's partner cheating on them or abandoning them. Shame and guilt help people in navigating complex social interactions to make amends for the strategic harms they sometimes inflict on others. Emotions, in short, guide the fundamentals of navigating social life and getting what one wants.

When we talk about a mind's Board of Directors, we mean these kinds of motivational systems, designed to identify and advance people's inclusive interests. They are the shadowy emotions, the "gut-level" responses—the things that get people to care about issues in the first place, determine their basic positions, and spur them to action.

People often think of the products of their motivational systems as mysterious, but that's just Spokespersons noticing that they're not privy to the deliberations of the Boards of Directors. People's lack of insight regarding their own motives doesn't mean that what the Boards are doing is unsophisticated or irrational—far from it. As authors such as Gladwell have discussed, it just means that the conscious parts of minds don't receive certain kinds of information about the workings of the unconscious parts of minds. People often know the results of the deliberations, but are not privy to the deliberations themselves. People also often think of the products of their motivational systems as unmoved by rational thought—the heart wants what it wants, after all. But this

is just their Spokespersons noticing the limits of their own role in the bureaucracy.

In recent years, some political scientists have integrated lessons from the psychology of emotions, recognizing that emotions are coordinating mechanisms that are goal-directed and that generally work in people's interests,[11] and that emotions give people a kind of sophistication with the politics of everyday life even among those who are mostly ignorant of national politics.[12] These efforts to integrate nuanced work on emotions are a welcome development.

Politicians are similarly getting more sophisticated in speaking to citizens' emotions. People's mental Boards of Directors deal with concrete consequences for themselves, their families, their friends, and their social networks. In political contexts, Boards seem to respond best to examples of real people like themselves who are helped or harmed by particular policies. And so the savvy politician, when advocating some policy or another, places Ordinary Americans nodding appreciatively in the camera's frame standing behind the politician. The politician tells stories about ordinary people being tangibly hurt by the politician's opponents' favored policy but tangibly helped by the politician's own favored policy—*you know, I met a woman, Jane Public, yesterday, and she told me that her child can't afford to go to college or get a life-saving medical procedure, but we're going to make sure no one has to go through what Jane and her family have gone through.* Cue applause from the Ordinary Americans. Persuasion is in no small part a matter of winning over people's (emotional) Boards of Directors.

Eternal Spin of the Political Mind

In summary, the mind has an agenda—advancing inclusive interests in the context of real-life goals. This agenda is set by the Board of Directors, a set of motivational systems whose internal workings are sophisticated, but kept out of one's own consciousness (and thus outside of public view). Other specialized mental systems deal with various kinds of tasks needed to gather information and carry out activities consistent

with the Board's agenda. One such set of systems is the Public Relations Department, primarily responsible for developing arguments and narratives that advance the mind's goal of appearing to be competent and generous. The creation of these stories also occurs largely outside of conscious awareness. Down the line is the Spokesperson, who is fed limited information, often including the basic directives of the Board along with the talking points of the Public Relations Department. The Spokesperson takes credit for the entire operation, claiming that the person does the things the person does and advocates the things the person advocates for the reasons listed in the talking points.

The result, when it comes to political opinions, is a messy combination of preferences for policies that advance people's own inclusive interests coupled with a stubborn set of talking points used to insist that, in fact, these policy preferences *really* just come from a well-reasoned concern for the welfare of everyone. I have the positions I have because I am a smart person and my favored policies are smart policies. I have the positions I have because I am a good person and my favored policies are good for society.

On the flip side, when human minds are confronted with people who disagree with their preferred policies, the mental machinery builds competing narratives. *Those people* have the positions they have because they are stupid people with stupid ideas. *Those people* have the positions they have because they are bad people who are at best brazenly selfish and at worst actively seeking to destroy what is good in society.

The Spokespersons are not *lying* when they pass along the stories that paint themselves as clever and noble and paint their opponents as clueless and nefarious. Still, even if they're not lying, that's not to say that they are not, in an important sense, often *wrong*. In fact, the stories typically are systematically and self-servingly mistaken. The mind has an agenda, but it's a hidden agenda, buried beneath self-serving spin, hidden not only from others but from its own conscious Spokesperson.

Evidence for these views has been accumulating for some time. Consider a study by psychologist Geoffrey Cohen, who had subjects evaluate a proposal on welfare reform.[13] Cohen varied the content of the proposal—generous or stringent—and, crucially, also varied the information he provided to subjects about whether the proposal was favored

by Democrats or Republicans. What mattered more, the content of the policy or the group that endorsed it? As Cohen put it: "For both liberal and conservative participants, the effect of reference group information overrode that of policy content. If their party endorsed it, liberals supported even a harsh welfare program, and conservatives supported even a lavish one."[14] Subjects were also asked about the extent to which their evaluation of the policy was influenced by the information they received about which party endorsed or opposed the policy. Because Cohen's design was experimental, it's clear that the information about the party that endorsed the proposal was the cause of subjects' views; yet subjects denied that the party positions determined their views.[15]

Subjects in Cohen's studies show the mental bureaucracy at work. The Board announced its position, which was to not bother thinking too hard and just use the Democrat/Republican tag to make a quick judgment in line with its preferred party coalition; the Public Relations Department provided the spin, which was that the person's position had little to do with lazily playing favorites but was instead based on being considerate and reasonable; and the Spokesperson did its job of earnestly claiming to have adopted the Boards' bottom-line position *because of* the well-spun reasons.

Jon Haidt's research illustrating "moral dumbfounding" has produced other examples.[16] In one case, subjects were told a story about a brother and sister who have sex with each other. They use two forms of birth control, they enjoy it, and they never do it again, though they believe the experience improved their relationship. Subjects were asked whether what the pair did was right or wrong, and, if it was wrong, why. Subjects generally believed that what the siblings did was wrong, of course. When subjects provided a reason for their judgment, they frequently offered one that was contradicted by the story, such as the possibility of a deformed child (which was negated in the story by the use of reliable birth control). Haidt found that subjects eventually gave up, and indicated that the act was wrong even though they couldn't provide a reason to justify this judgment.

Moral dumbfounding illustrates the Spokesperson's limited purview. The Spokesperson doesn't determine moral preferences (that's the Board's job), but just passes along stories about those moral preferences.

Challenging those made-up stories doesn't typically cause people to change their moral preferences; the Spokesperson just gives up . . . *Hey, I've got my orders and this stuff is above my pay grade*.

A particularly relevant line of research comes from psychologists Nicholas Epley and David Dunning, who have investigated people's beliefs about their own motives versus others' motives. Subjects in one study had to choose which of two tasks they themselves would do, and which task they would assign to another person. The "self-interest" of the assignment was manipulated—the unpleasant task would last either thirty minutes or only ten minutes. And the "moral sentiments" of the assignment were manipulated as well—the other person they assigned the other task to was either a male college student or a ten-year-old girl (in general people feel worse about assigning unpleasant tasks to little girls). The results? While people predicted that they themselves wouldn't be as strongly influenced by self-interest as other people and would of course be strongly influenced by moral sentiments, in fact self-interest mattered a great deal: four times more people took the unpleasant task when it was only ten minutes long rather than thirty minutes long.[17]

As Epley and Dunning put it, in a remark that closely echoes the thesis we pursue in this chapter: "participants correctly anticipated that others would be strongly influenced by self-interest, but erroneously predicted that they themselves would not. . . . On the other hand, participants inaccurately predicted that moral sentiments would influence both their own and others' behavior. Although participants generally overestimated the impact of moral sentiments, they did so particularly when predicting their own behavior."[18] Summarizing these findings, they wrote: "Participants tended to predict that their own behavior would be influenced only by the level of moral sentiments inherent in the situation and not by the level of self-interest. Actual behavior, in contrast, was influenced only by participants' self-interest."[19]

Similar patterns of results have been found by other researchers. In studies in which people are asked to indicate how important various motives—"extrinsic" incentives, such as pay, compared to "intrinsic" motives, such as "accomplishing something worthwhile"—are for themselves and for others, people tend to think that others are extrinsically motivated while claiming that they themselves are intrinsically moti-

vated. *Other people do it for the money; I do it because it's worthwhile*. For example, in one study, a majority of prospective lawyers indicated that they were pursuing the career path because of its intellectual appeal as opposed to the financial rewards; but they thought that their peers were on average pursuing the field for the money.[20] In another study, college students estimated that *other students* would be nearly twice as likely to donate blood if they were paid fifteen dollars compared to the case in which there was no payment at all. Crucially, however, the students reported that they themselves would be nearly as likely to donate in both cases, suggesting that subjects felt that others respond to financial incentives in a way that they themselves would not.[21]

Once people's Boards of Directors have adopted their favored positions, additional processes help people preserve these views. For instance, in one study looking at gun control, subjects were given the choice of reading arguments from various sources that could reasonably be inferred to be either in line with their own position on the issue or from contrary sources (the NRA, Citizens Against Handguns, etc.). Do people investigate relevant arguments evenhandedly? As the authors of the work put it: "[P]roponents of the issue sought out more supporting than opposing arguments, and this difference was quite substantial for sophisticates. . . . When given the chance, sophisticated respondents selected arguments from like-minded groups 70–75% of the time. For example, on average sophisticated opponents of stricter gun control sought out six arguments of the NRA or the Republican Party and only two arguments from the opposition."[22] Such results imply that instead of dispassionately seeking out information in the services of determining the most sensible, reasonable positions based on the facts of the matter, people try to find arguments that can be used to bolster their Boards' existing views.

A recent study by Yale law professor Dan Kahan and colleagues illustrates a similar point.[23] Kahan measured people's political views and then showed them data from one of two (fake) studies. In one experiment, subjects were shown information about rates of recovering from an illness for medical patients who had received a particular treatment versus those who had not received the treatment. In a second experiment, subjects were shown information presented in exactly the same

way, but this time comparing crime rates in cities with gun bans versus cities without such bans. The math was identical in both cases, but the animating idea behind the study was that subjects might be motivated to see the answer they wanted to see in the case of guns as opposed to medical treatment. Indeed they did. Numerically sophisticated Democrats, when seeing data that gun bans reduced crime, correctly identified this pattern. But when numerically sophisticated Democrats were presented with data that indicated that the gun bans were ineffective, their number-interpreting performance was significantly worse. Reciprocal results were found for Republicans. The Public Relations Department sees what it wants to see in data, even if what it wants to see isn't there.

Passions and Reasons in the Abortion Debate

To see, concretely, how these ideas work in the context of an important policy domain, we'll now take a look at the work of Boards of Directors, Public Relations Departments, and Spokespersons in the particularly thorny case of abortion. Putting it a bit roughly—and we'll revisit this idea in more detail in the next chapter—people who support abortion rights are often people who spend big chunks of their early adult lives having sex but not having children. That is, they have an interest in the availability of the tools that aid family planning. Their opponents, in contrast, tend to be people who have an interest in making casual sex socially more costly and difficult; as a result, they seek to limit family planning. These interests, we think, explain why many people have their varying intuitive reactions to abortion—their Boards are mostly thinking about how abortion affects adults' lifestyles.[24]

This lifestyle-driven view helps explain some otherwise puzzling empirical details of people's abortion views (as we'll see shortly) but, like most interest-based sources of issue opinions, makes for terrible public relations. The pro-life side can't say things like: *It would be better for people like us if other people didn't sleep around very much, so we favor things that make casual sex riskier.* The pro-choice side can't say things like: *We want to spend big chunks of our lives sleeping around without having babies, so it's really better for us if we have the tools to make that easier.*

There are, of course, far better stories to be told. Some of the favorite protagonists in the political stories of Public Relations Departments are women and children. For the pro-choice side, their Spokespersons get handed a useful story rallying around women: *We support the right of women to control their own bodies.* And for the pro-life side, their Spokespersons get handed a different useful story rallying around children: *We oppose abortion because it kills babies . . . babies, not fetuses, because, it turns out, we believe that life begins at conception.*

Both stories provide good spin but are bad explanations for the actual sources of people's views. The life-begins-at-conception account sits very uneasily with the reality of pro-life attitudes: While pro-life Americans routinely oppose abortion in cases in which women willingly have sex but don't (currently) want to have (more) children, the majority of pro-life Americans do not oppose abortion in cases of rape, incest, or fetal deformity. To see the point, imagine a survey asking someone whether they support a mother's right to kill her two-year-old. Everyone would answer no to this, of course. Fine, the survey continues, but what if the mother had been raped? Or if the child were developmentally disabled? Now is it OK? Neither situation, we think, would change anyone's answer. People don't take circumstances into account when the issue is killing two-year-olds. But they do when it comes to abortion.

These kinds of exceptions are inconsistent with the life-begins-at-conception account but quite consistent with our lifestyle-driven theory. Rape and fetal deformity are circumstances that don't have much to do with casual sex or family planning—these are cases in which women who engage in no casual sex or family planning at all might nonetheless want abortions. Pro-life Boards of Directors make exceptions because their judgments are based in large part on adults' lifestyles.

On a related note, sometimes the pro-choice side is confused by the fact that the pro-life side often opposes expanding the availability of birth control and comprehensive sex education, both of which could reduce the need for abortions in the first place. Surely, choicers think, if the goal is to reduce the number of abortions, then an obvious step in the right direction would be anything that reduces the number of unplanned pregnancies. If one views pro-life opinions as primarily aimed at casual sex and family planning, however, there's no confusion. Readily

available birth control makes casual sex less risky, explaining lifers' enhanced opposition.

The pro-life side, of course, is seeking to interfere in other adults' lives, for which it's helpful to have some higher authority. Their Public Relations Departments distance themselves from responsibility for undermining anyone's lifestyle: *Blame God, not me.* One often sees talk that abortion opponents are "biblical literalists" who simply get their views from the Bible.[25] This proposed basis for the sources of pro-life views is implausible. First, while the Bible covers a lot of topics (including adultery, divorce, and homosexuality), it contains nothing—really, nothing—that directly speaks to when life begins or whether abortion is wrong. (It's hard to prove a negative, but we'll just point out that one of your authors once offered a hundred dollars to the first person in a large undergraduate course who could provide a clear biblical source for pro-life views. He left the offer open for several weeks and never had to pay.) Second, there are a ton of things that the Bible literally says that are literally ignored by biblical literalists. The book of Leviticus, for example, contains wide-ranging directives that are really quite specific. To take just a few examples: Don't wear clothing woven of two kinds of material; don't plant your field with two kinds of seed; don't cut your hair at the sides of your head; don't get tattoos; treat foreign visitors the same as native-born people. So, the biblical-literalism account of abortion is a double failure—abortion isn't in the Bible, and people quite often ignore things that actually are in the Bible, even when they claim to take it literally.

The Public Relations Departments of choicers don't do much better with their favored stories. These stories tend to be about how pro-choice people believe that women have a fundamental right to control their own bodies and view attempts to force women to carry a pregnancy to term as a kind of reactionary misogyny, even part of a "war on women."

First, however, the "war on women" story leads to the expectation that men are more likely to oppose abortion rights than women, yet the differences between women's and men's views on abortion are in fact trivial. If anything, women are a bit more likely than men to be consistently pro-life. Abortion might be an issue that relates particularly to women, but pro-choice views are not more common among women.

From our lifestyle-driven point of view, this is not surprising—we don't view abortion restrictions as aimed at women generally, but at casual sex and family planning, which involve (some) women (but not other women) and (some) men (but not other men). As we discuss in more detail in chapter 4, opposition to abortion tends to come from both men and women with more traditional sexual and reproductive lifestyles, while support for abortion rights tends to come from both men and women who are less traditional.

In a related point, as Kristen Luker examined in *Abortion and the Politics of Motherhood*, the activists on both sides of the abortion debate are typically women. This is inconsistent with a simple "war on women" framework. But it's highly consistent with our lifestyle-driven viewpoint given Luker's emphasis on the different features of pro-choice and pro-life women activists—the pro-choice side tends to attract unmarried professional women while the pro-life side attracts more stay-at-home wives with lots of kids. It's not tough to spot the group with a bigger interest in family planning versus the group that might be really nervous by the notion of a society with lots of casual sex.

Another weakness in the women-controlling-their-bodies explanation is that there are plenty of ways in which most pro-choice people otherwise agree that women (and men) should be restricted in what they do with their bodies: seat belt laws, prostitution laws, restrictions on trans fats and giant sodas, mandatory health insurance, and so forth. Hardly anyone holds views actually consistent with the idea that people should be able to do whatever they want with their bodies.

The pro-choice side engages in its own interpretative contortions when it comes to sacred documents, viewing the U.S. Constitution as guaranteeing a "right to privacy" that prohibits laws that outlaw abortion prior to fetal viability. This interpretation is, to put it mildly, on thin ice when it comes to the actual text. People favoring a right to privacy don't claim to be "strict constructionists" but rather view the Constitution as a "living" document that changes with the times. However, these sorts of principles don't drive judicial outcomes so much as they are themselves driven by one's favored outcomes. It's a classic case of what psychologists call "motivated reasoning." In short, practically no one who wasn't already in favor of abortion rights would read the U.S.

Constitution and infer that it prevents states from limiting abortion, just as practically no one who wasn't already opposed to abortion would read the Bible and decide that it takes the position that abortion is a serious moral issue.

A common portrait of abortion opinions presents a nation polarized into warring tribes by deeply held, plainly incompatible principles.[26] But these stories don't really explain what's going on. Instead, the minds-as-bureaucracies account, though more complicated, pays off in doing a good job of explaining the whole package. We can understand the positions taken by people's Boards (the positions are mostly driven by considerations of adults' promiscuity and family planning); we can understand why people's Public Relations Departments would want to hide these real sources behind made-up, noble-sounding stories about how it all comes down to protecting women or children; and we can understand why people's Spokespersons defend the stories so adamantly, despite the fact that the stories fail both empirically and logically.

From Minds to Issues

In part I of this book we've sketched the psychological foundations that will help in figuring out why people have the political views they have. In chapter 1 we saw that it's just not the case that people typically fall consistently either to the left or to the right in their political opinions. In chapter 1 we also argued that many of the typical policy-laden "value" or "personality" variables used to account for political opinions end up creating plainly circular explanations that provide lots of renaming but few actual answers. In chapter 2 we saw that self-interest often matters in political opinions, despite claims to the contrary. In chapter 2 we also argued that typical notions of "self-interest" are too limited to be of much use; instead, we argued for an expanded notion of "inclusive interests" to better connect to the kinds of concerns that drive real people in everyday life.

In chapter 3 we made our case that minds are Machiavellian bureaucracies, driven by the agenda-setting commands of a back-room Board of Directors, filtered through a speech-writing Public Relations

Department that seeks to give the Board's commands a public-friendly veneer, and presented to the public by the earnest Spokesperson more widely known as the conscious self. The agenda of the secretive Board—advancing the person's everyday, real-life, competitive interests—typically goes unrecognized by the happy-talking Spokesperson, who cheerfully adopts whatever story will make its wider bureaucratic home seem most principled, altruistic, responsible, consistent, considerate, and reasonable. A key implication is that *people can't just introspect their way into figuring out why they have the political preferences they have* but, instead, have to piece together the puzzle in other ways.

Together, these considerations lead us to a view of the political animal as ultimately driven not by ideologies or philosophies or values, but by the desires of individuals to advance their inclusive interests, to support societal rules that aid themselves and their families and their allies in achieving the kinds of fundamental goals that drive everyday life.

Sometimes advancing a person's own inclusive interests advances most other people's interests as well, and so there's little conflict. Residents of a given city, for example, all want a safe and reliable water system, and one doesn't see a lot of political conflict with a given side favoring safe and reliable water and the other side opposing it. But sometimes there are real conflicts in which some people benefit from one regime and others from another. Income redistribution is one example, generally benefiting the poor at the expense of the wealthy. Some of these conflicts in a given time and place become so widespread, recurring, and unresolved that they appear as standard themes in political and moral conversations.

We now shift from the generalities of political minds to the specifics of political issues. The next set of chapters will explore why different people take different positions on widely contested issues. Why do some people oppose legalizing marijuana and others support it? Why do some people oppose same-sex marriage and others support it? Why do some people oppose expanded immigration and others support it? Why do some people oppose race-based affirmative action and others support it? Why do some people oppose expanding government safety nets and others support it?

Our view of minds leads us to ignore some of the usual suspects scholars identify when addressing these questions: ideologies, values, political personality variables, biblical literalism, constitutional principles, and so on. We're less interested in the press releases penned by Public Relations Departments. Instead, we're trying to gather clues about the closed-door meetings of people's Boards of Directors. We're looking for the ways in which the policies people support affect their everyday lives and how different features of different people give rise to competing interests and competing political positions.

In the next few chapters, our tools will largely consist of demographic information that figures heavily in the work of political professionals—race, gender, religion, income, education, and so on. Our goal is to explain not just *how* different demographic features connect with different policy disputes, but *why*.

A key insight from political targeting has been that different demographic features relate to different kinds of issues. People's religious lives might relate to their views on abortion, for example, but that doesn't mean they have much to do with their views on immigration. People's income might relate to their views on taxes, but that doesn't mean that income has much to do with their views on legalizing marijuana. As we've argued, thinking about people as being generally "liberal" or generally "conservative" can advance the ball only so far. The connections between people's lives and politics occur in the details. And so, in the next few chapters, we won't be talking about how being a racial minority makes a person generally "liberal," for example. (On some issues, in fact, we'll see that racial minorities tend to be more "conservative.") The key is to focus issue by issue. What are the competing interests at stake for a particular issue? What are the demographic features that relate to different individuals' interests for a particular issue?

Moving now to part II of the book, we'll split up the sets of policies we examine into three chapters covering issues relating to sex and reproduction (e.g., abortion and pornography), group-based issues (e.g., same-sex marriage and affirmative action), and economic issues (e.g., government spending on health care). For each of these three sets of issues, different aspects of people's lives and interests are implicated, and, as a result, different sets of demographic features come into play.

Part II

Political Issues

CHAPTER 4

Fighting over Sex: Lifestyle Issues and Religion

When it comes to sex and fertility, the United States and other developed countries are incredibly diverse. It's easy to look at the sexual revolution, for example, and think that the road from the 1950s to the present in the United States led from *Father Knows Best* to *Sex and the City*. A closer look shows that the country moved from one in which most people had lasting marriages and lots of kids to one in which there is tremendous variety. The old patterns didn't die out; they just shrank.

The generation born in the 1930s that came of age around the 1950s by and large had a typical pattern when it came to marriage. By the time they were in their fifties, around 95% of them had married and only about a third had divorced; that is, there was a roughly two-thirds majority of people who married and never divorced.[1] Among the baby boomers, born between 1946 and 1964, marriage rates were also very high but the rate of divorce climbed from a third to a half. Generations subsequent to the baby boomers have married less, with a related rise in nonmarital cohabitation. Still, plenty of people these days get married once and never divorce, but nothing like two-thirds of the country. The nation went from—statistically speaking—typicality to variety.

Related shifts occurred in Americans' sexual activity and fertility. Among women born in the 1930s, only 10% of those in their fifties reported having had more than five sex partners in their adult lives. Among baby-boom women in their fifties this figure rose to 25%. For birth rates, close to 60% of the 1930s generation had three or more children, while baby boomers were equally spread among having three or

more children, having exactly two children, and having either one or none. Having few sex partners and lots of kids was once highly typical of American women, but now it's just one pattern among others.

In recent years, television shows such as *Sex and the City* and *Girls* have portrayed the lives of young women in big cities as being filled with a series of sexual affairs. The media often write about "hook-up culture" in a way that implies that everybody's doing it.[2] From popular accounts, one might be forgiven for having the impression that modern young women are as homogenous as their midcentury counterparts, but at the opposite extreme.

In fact, despite the fictional escapades of Carrie, Charlotte, Miranda, and Samantha on *Sex and the City*, almost one in ten women in their twenties these days are virgins; almost another three in ten report having had sex with only one person since age eighteen. Fewer than two in ten report having had sex with seven or more people. True, about a third of women in their twenties have no children and go to bars about once a month or more—something resembling *Sex and the City*—but then just as many have children and don't go to bars as often as once a month. Roughly a quarter have no children and still don't go to bars as often as once a month.

College students show similar patterns. We've given anonymous surveys on these topics to a couple thousand undergraduates at a half-dozen American universities. Contradicting the media portrayal of students as sexually voracious, a fifth in our samples have never had intercourse or hooked up and almost another fifth have had intercourse or hooked up with only one or two partners. On the other end of the spectrum, about a quarter have had ten or more intercourse or hook-up partners. About a third report rarely if ever drinking, another third drink a couple of times a month, and the other third drink more than that. Around three-quarters rarely if ever use recreational drugs.

The wilder groups of college students make for juicier gossip, better TV, and more interesting press coverage—few people would be interested in reading an article headlined "Arizona State Undergraduate Stays in Dorm Room, Studies on Friday Night"—so the wilder kids are more visible. This asymmetry in media coverage makes it easy to over-

estimate their prevalence. But for every college kid who goes wild, there's another who is abstinent.

College itself represents another way that America has become increasingly diverse. Relatively few people, especially women, got college degrees prior to the baby-boom generation. But, again, the pattern goes from typicality to variety. Most people reading a book like this are college educated and tend to overestimate how many other Americans these days are as well. The reality is that, even among Americans in their thirties, only 35% have a bachelor's degree or more, 28% have some college or an associate's degree but no bachelor's degree, and the other 37% never completed even a year of college.[3]

Marriage, sex, fertility, and education interact in complex ways. For instance, most highly educated people delay starting families compared with those with less education.[4] Women who don't go to college typically have their first child in their late teens or early twenties; women with bachelor's degrees generally wait until their mid-twenties to early thirties. Women with less education are more likely to have children outside of marriage; at higher education levels, few do.

Also, marriages are less stable among those who marry young. First marriages for people their late teens have about a 50% chance of ending within ten years, but people first marrying in their late twenties have only around a 25% to 30% chance of splitting up within ten years.[5] Divorce rates also relate to sex and nonmarital cohabitation. Putting it somewhat bluntly, people who have sex with many people are less likely to stay married to one person. Overall, people first marrying at around age twenty-four have a little over a 30% chance of splitting up within ten years. But for those who had prior sex partners and who lived together before getting engaged, the ten-year divorce rate is over 40%; among those who were virgins until around the time they married, the ten-year divorce rate is tiny, less than 15%.

In sum, there's a lot of diversity. Many people have lots of kids; others don't. Lots of people wait until getting married before having kids; lots of people don't. Lots of young people are hooking up and drinking and using drugs; lots of young people are not. Lots of people have several sex partners and cohabit before getting married, if they marry at all; lots of

people don't. Lots of young adults are highly educated and delay having kids; lots of young adults are not and do not.

Freewheelers and Ring-Bearers

To make things easier to follow, we'll use the terms "Freewheelers" and "Ring-Bearers" to describe different broad categories of sexual and reproductive lifestyles. Freewheelers include people who sleep with more people, are sexually active outside of committed relationships, have more same-sex partners, party, drink, go to bars, and use recreational drugs more, live together outside of marriage, are less likely to marry at all, get divorced more when they do marry, and have fewer kids. Ring-Bearers include people who wait longer to have sex, tend to have sex only in committed relationships (often waiting until getting engaged or married), go to bars and party less, don't cohabit outside of marriage, have long-lasting marriages, and have more kids.

People don't, of course, all fit tidily into the Freewheeler and Ring-Bearer categories, and many exist in the places in between. Further, lots of people have predominantly Freewheeler patterns at some points in their lives and predominantly Ring-Bearer patterns at others. Still, by and large, the categories tend to hang together. People who sleep with more people are more likely to drink more, use recreational drugs, and cohabit outside of marriage, all of which relate to lower marriage rates and less stable marriages over the long term, which in turn are associated with having fewer children. Freewheelers, by our terms, are people who lean in that direction on the whole, while Ring-Bearers are people who lean in the opposite direction.

While we can distinguish broadly between people who lean in either the Freewheeler or Ring-Bearer direction, the details of their sexual and reproductive patterns have complex intersections with race and education. African Americans have lower marriage rates than whites (a Freewheeler trend), but they also drink less on average (a Ring-Bearer trend). People with more education tend to delay having children and end up with fewer of them (Freewheeler trends), but they also tend to delay having sex and end up with lower divorce rates (Ring-Bearer

trends). Among Ring-Bearers, the less educated are more likely to marry early and have higher divorce rates down the line. Among Freewheelers, while those with less education are more likely to have kids conceived in the context of their younger partying, those with more education tend to put off having kids until much later in life and often end up having none at all—an arc all too familiar to the characters in *Sex and the City*.

The Interests of Freewheelers and Ring-Bearers

In sorting out how these lifestyle differences translate into different interests and, consequently, different political views, let's start with an easy case, one that we suspect will sound very familiar to many readers. Consider a person who gets lots of education and goes into a high earning career path. The person also enjoys a Freewheeler lifestyle, involving late teens and early twenties with plenty of partying and a certain number of low-commitment sexual experiences. Later, there might be a nonmarital cohabitation (or two, or three), leading ultimately to one or more marriages and a small number of children later in life. As familiar as this sounds, people who get college degrees, delay having children, and pursue Freewheeler lifestyles constitute maybe a fifth or a quarter of modern Americans.

From the point of view of someone with such a lifestyle pattern, does it help or hurt their interests when *other people* morally condemn low-commitment sexual activity? Moral condemnation from other people isn't something abstract; there are negative consequences for the condemned person's social goals of winning friends and influencing people. Obviously, the people who suffer from moral attacks on adventurous sexuality are more adventurous people, and they should be expected to defend themselves by recruiting others to the position that moral attacks on low-commitment sex are not OK. They might even lead their own moral counterattacks against anti-promiscuity moralization, bringing collective pressures to bear in opposition to those who engage in "slut shaming" and related kinds of lifestyle intolerance.

What about their interests in having alcohol and recreational drug use be legal and not viewed as serious moral issues? Members of this

group are especially likely to have active party phases in the service of their hooking-up agenda, and they benefit when these activities don't have high legal or social costs.

Is it in their interests for birth control and abortion to be widely available? Certainly. These are people who engage in sexual activity for long periods of time outside of committed relationships while they're climbing educational and professional ladders; for such people, it's *really important* not to be forced to have children at inconvenient times. They want to wait until their ducks are in a row before having children, who will then themselves reap the rewards of their parents' high education and income. These are people who, more than most, have stakes in "family planning."

These highly educated Freewheelers are relatively easy to understand. People who party and sleep around have an interest in other people not bringing legal or moral costs to bear on them for doing so. People who want to delay having children while partying and sleeping around have an interest in the availability of family planning, including the backstop of legal abortion. Their mental Boards of Directors will prefer moral and political policies that help them live the lives they want to live.

Less straightforward is figuring out why anyone would want to stop them. Aren't these the classically "victimless" misdemeanors? If I want to go all hippie or high roller, have some hooch, inhale a hookah, hook up with a hottie, hole up with a honey—ain't nobody's business if I do, right? And so what if I want to do all this without having children? Seriously, wouldn't everyone *prefer* that, if I do these things, I do them without having children? Why would anyone's Board of Directors object to any of this?

Consider a very different, but equally common, lifestyle pattern. Consider people who get moderate amounts of education, marry in their early or mid-twenties, and have relatively higher numbers of children. A key, recurring problem with this pattern is that, if the marriages don't last, the women and children are often faced with potentially crippling economic hardship.[6] (In fact, these days, in large part because of Social Security and Medicare, the elderly are rarely impoverished compared with earlier eras, and the typical demographic profile of American pov-

erty has shifted away from the elderly poor to unmarried women with less education and higher numbers of young children.)[7]

Plenty of such couples do, of course, have marriages that last. What predicts a lasting marriage? Waiting; getting married later in life without already having had children.[8] But for people who get married earlier (in no small part, often, *because they want to end up with more children*), sexual commitment is important. The marriages most likely to last for those marrying younger are those in which the members of the couple don't have sex at all before marriage (even among teens, only about one in five of these marriages split up within ten years). Short of waiting until marriage, the marriages that last are between people who have premarital sex but only with their eventual marriage partner and don't live together before marriage. Next down the list, they are people who have sex with only their eventual marriage partner and live together only once they are engaged to be married. If, in contrast, a couple comes to the marriage with a more storied sexual history, among people who marry younger and have had other premarital sex partners, the divorce risk is really high, with well over half splitting up within ten years, when there are typically young children to be cared for.

Highly educated Freewheelers seem to want to tell less educated Ring-Bearers that they should not want to prioritize family stability over sexual experimentation. Related messages from Freewheelers to Ring-Bearers are that they should not want to have lots of kids, or that they should only have kids the way highly educated Freewheelers sometimes do it, by waiting until they are substantially older, and then relying on some combination of luck and expensive reproductive technology. Ring-Bearers, however, have their own plans and make their own lifestyle choices, preferring to work things the old-fashioned way.

The problems faced by people who choose Ring-Bearer lifestyles explain why they might find it in their interests to discourage other people from engaging in lots of low-commitment sexual activity. For young Ring-Bearers, a big problem is finding suitable partners to share Ring-Bearer lives with. Young women asking their boyfriends to wait for sex have to compete with young women offering more immediate rewards.

For both sexes, the fewer people fooling around, the more suitable candidates there are for long-term Ring-Bearer relationships.

For married Ring-Bearers, infidelity can have an especially serious impact. Ring-Bearer women often rely on the continued support of their husbands to improve the odds that having lots of kids won't lead to poverty. These women often curtail their own educations and careers, a sacrifice that is increasingly risky to the extent that their husbands are more likely to leave. As for the men, they're offering to spend most of their time and resources over the whole of their lives supporting their wives and children. While one might argue over whether it *ought* to matter to such men whether those children are his rather than the offspring of sexual infidelity, it's clear that for most men it *does* (as Maury Povich and his daytime talk-show emulators can attest).

For both Ring-Bearer men and women, the chances of maintaining a faithful marriage depend in part on what people around them are doing when it comes to low-commitment sex. Ring-Bearers have an increased interest in minimizing the temptations faced by their mates, and the fewer people fooling around, the less likely it is that one's mate will succumb.

An obvious way to make Freewheeling less common is to make it more costly. Moral condemnation of low-commitment sex imposes social costs. Outlawing recreational drugs imposes legal costs on hard partyers. Outlawing abortion and limiting the availability of birth control makes it harder to engage in casual sex without jeopardizing plans to delay having children, which would surely be a powerful deterrent to promiscuity, especially among the highly educated crowd.

Another way to reduce levels of (local) Freewheeling is to surround oneself with other Ring-Bearers who similarly support placing high costs on Freewheeler lifestyles. The Amish, for example, isolate themselves in rural communities centered on strict family morals and high levels of neighborly support, something especially important for large families with modest incomes. While the Amish example is extreme, there is more than a passing resemblance between it and couples moving to smaller communities and becoming heavily involved in Ring-Bearer churches when it comes time to have and raise children.

There's also an element of strategy that's a bit more subtle. Ring-Bearer women want their men to believe that the women are faithful and that the children are the husband's own (so that the men will have more incentive to stick around and support the family). Ring-Bearer men want their women to believe that the men are faithful and reliable (so that the women will feel more comfortable having additional children without worrying as much about future poverty). One way to convince someone of one's seriousness in these areas is to make it more costly to break one's promises.

So, think of two people, both of them currently in committed relationships (not with each other, but with different people). One of them often goes on about how terribly wrong it is for people to fool around; the other takes a more tolerant position, saying that, you know, sometimes fooling around is understandable. Now imagine that both get caught cheating on their significant other. Both will be seen as having done something wrong, but the pious moralist will bear the enhanced moral costs of being judged a deeply hypocritical blowhard. It matters in these cases whether a person ups the ante by announcing publicly that they think a given set of behaviors is especially worthy of moral punishment. The ante is upped even further for people (like active members of Ring-Bearer churches) whose social allies similarly condemn promiscuity.

In sum, the interests of Ring-Bearers are advanced both when they actually reduce levels of Freewheeling around them and when they are seen to be the kinds of people who want to reduce levels of Freewheeling. Either way it comes to the same thing—supporting policies that make Freewheeling more costly.

The Politics of Ring-Bearers and Freewheelers

Lifestyle information is crucial in making sense of why some people support and others oppose various policies relating to sex and reproduction. In fact, one of the reasons we're relying heavily on data from the U.S. General Social Survey (as opposed to something like the American

National Election Studies) is that the GSS is one of the very few large studies that not only asks about politics, but also collects information about sexual history, how often respondents go to bars, education, marital history, cohabitation, and children.

We'll explore five moral and political areas: (1) views on whether premarital sex is morally wrong or not, (2) views on whether pornography ought to be legally available to adults, (3) views on whether abortion should be legally available across a range of circumstances (when motivated by rape, by fetal deformity, by not wanting more children, by being poor, and by being single), (4) views on whether teens should have access to birth control without parental consent, and (5) views on whether marijuana should be legal. This last one—marijuana legalization—might seem off topic, but our own studies have shown that it belongs on the list. In the United States, Europe, and Japan, views on marijuana legalization share a uniquely powerful relationship with views on casual sex.[9] People's Public Relations Departments might come up with press releases couching views about recreational drugs in terms of public safety, health care, and children (always the children!), but their Boards of Directors are thinking mostly about how pot helps people to hook up.

As a simple exercise, think of someone, and make the following calculations. Add 1 point for each of the following: The person has had five or more sex partners since age eighteen; the person goes to bars or taverns about once a month or more; the person is lesbian, gay, or bisexual; the person is living in a nonmarital cohabitation. And subtract 1 point for these features: The person has had none or only one sex partner since age eighteen; the person pretty much never goes to bars or taverns. If the result is a positive number, then the person you have in mind is a Freewheeler; if the result is a negative number, he or she is a Ring-Bearer. If the number is 0, then think of the person as somewhere in between the other two groups. On these very rough categories, 39% of American adults are Freewheelers, 34% are Ring-Bearers, and 27% are in the middle.

Even using this very coarse metric, the GSS data show strong connections between sexual and reproductive lifestyles on the one hand and lifestyle politics and morals on the other. Among Freewheelers, two-thirds report that they think premarital sex is "not at all wrong";

only one-third of Ring-Bearers agree. More than three-quarters of Freewheelers believe pornography should be legal for adults; only half of Ring-Bearers agree. Two-thirds of Freewheelers think that teens should have access to birth control without parental consent; less than half of Ring-Bearers agree. Most Freewheelers think marijuana should be legal; only a quarter of Ring-Bearers agree. (Additional details on these and other data-related points in this chapter are presented in the Data Appendix for Chapter 4.)

Education doesn't play a big role in the issues we just reviewed, but it does when it comes to abortion. Among Freewheelers who have bachelor's degrees, over two-thirds think abortion should be legally available in practically any circumstance the GSS asks about. In contrast, among Ring-Bearers without bachelor's degrees, while almost two-thirds think abortion should be legally available in cases of rape or fetal deformity, almost three-quarters think abortion should be illegal when motivated by not wanting more children, by being poor, or by being single. Freewheelers without bachelor's degrees are split basically 50/50 on these latter kinds of abortion circumstances. Ring-Bearers with bachelor's degrees land somewhere in between less educated Freewheelers and less educated Ring-Bearers.

Across all these sexual and reproductive lifestyle issues, those with liberal views are more likely to have features such as higher numbers of sex partners, nonmarital cohabitation or sexually active singledom, more frequent bar visits, and fewer children. The conservatives on these issues are more likely to be married or widowed with few past sex partners or not currently sexually active at all, to avoid bars, and to have had more children.

In our analyses using a range of demographic information (holding religion aside, which we'll get to shortly), we find other variables that matter, but no variables are more important than people's sexual and reproductive lifestyles. Summarizing some of these smaller effects: Older people are more likely than younger people to disapprove of pornography, teens having access to birth control without parental consent, and marijuana legalization; women are more likely than men to disapprove of pornography but to approve of teenage birth control; and Southerners are particularly likely to disapprove of premarital sex and abortion.

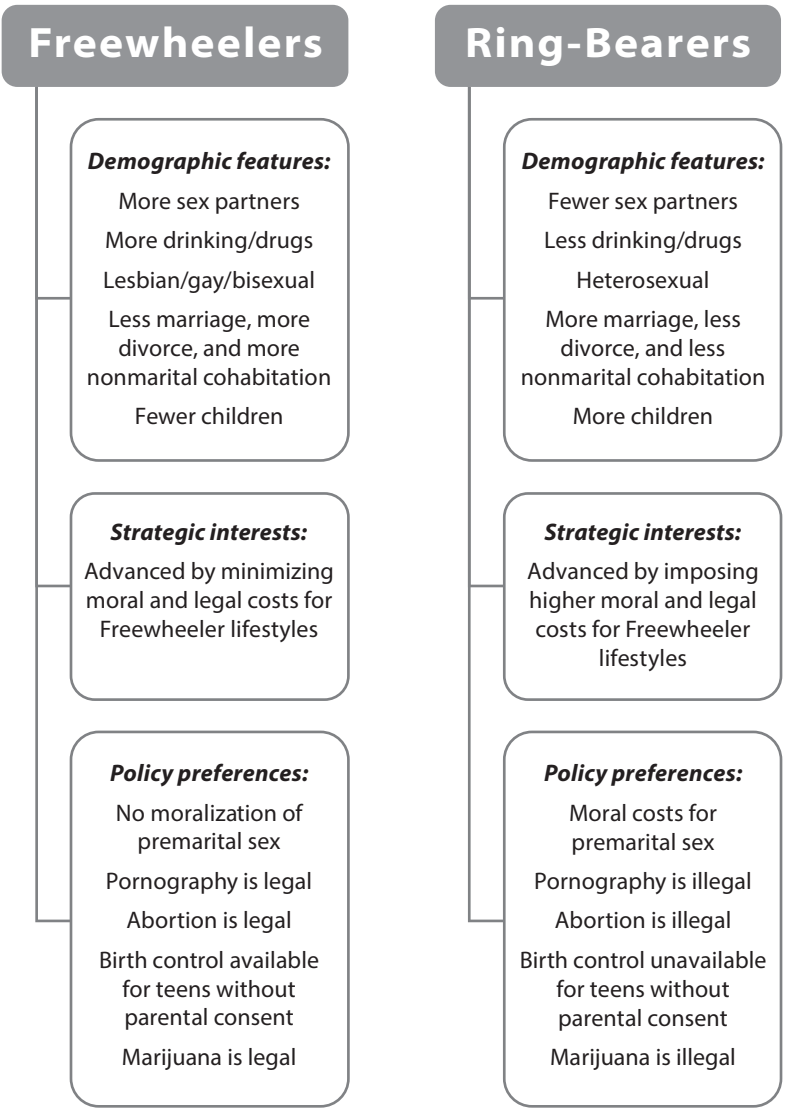

Figure 4.1 Freewheelers vs. Ring-Bearers

Viewing issues such as abortion as purely "symbolic" or based on abstract values or religious motives, as they are in some political science circles, misses the important point that people's lives mesh coherently with their lifestyle politics.[10] When it comes to sexual and reproductive policies, the real-life effects of having restrictive or unrestrictive regimes differ based on how people live. These competing interests translate into competing positions. Freewheelers prefer policies that benefit Freewheelers. Ring-Bearers prefer policies that benefit Ring-Bearers. Not always, of course, but usually. In short, demographic features often reflect diverse interests, and diverse interests often lead to competing policy positions. The key is in matching the relevant demographics to the relevant interests to the relevant policies. Figure 4.1 summarizes things to this point.

Churches: Ring-Bearer Support Groups

So far we've largely skirted the issue of religion. It's time to stop beating around the burning bush.

There are lots of ideas about religion floating around. A somewhat quirky psychological perspective known as Terror Management Theory proposes that perhaps religion serves to provide comfort in the face of the horrors of mortality. Well-known biologist Richard Dawkins and philosopher Daniel Dennett suggest that religious ideas may be like viruses that infest human minds, ultimately serving their own interests rather than the interests of their human hosts.[11] People who favor the idea that between-group competition is especially important propose that ideas about invisible, rule-enforcing gods evolved to help humans cooperate in large-scale groups, providing extra incentives for members of groups not to lie to and steal from one another (because they're always being watched by the invisible, rule-enforcing gods).[12] Or maybe the notions of gods and souls are just by-products of human tendencies to interpret all kinds of mindless phenomena as though they are caused by intentional beings.[13]

But perhaps the most common view in social science is the simple socialization account: People are raised one way or the other when it

comes to religion, soaking it up like sponges from friends and family. Here's an example from a recent political science book discussing Republican/Democratic identification: "The classical view of party identification argues for the similarity of party identification with religious attachments precisely on the grounds that both are acquired early in life, and more or less reflexively in response to parents and peers."[14]

It is certainly true that there are correlations between the religious patterns of parents and children, particularly when it comes to religious identities (i.e., calling oneself Catholic versus Jewish versus something else). But the general claim about parent-child resemblance doesn't extend as easily from religious *identities* to religious *participation*. Close to 40% of young adults these days were raised in households in which one or both parents attended church about every week; but by their mid-twenties, fewer than 20% are attending that frequently.[15] These results illustrate a continuation of prior trends. Over half of baby boomers' parents attended services about weekly or more when the boomers were growing up. However, in their late teens to mid-twenties, less than a quarter of baby boomers were themselves attending about weekly or more. By their late thirties, this fraction had risen to about a third and has stayed there since. In short, people attend church a lot less as they make the transition from childhood to early adulthood.

Changes in religious participation are even more complicated than these patterns might seem to imply. Of the fewer than 20% of young adults frequently attending church, only a bit over half came from the 40% with high-attendance parents. Looked at another way, among the 40% raised in high-attendance families, *by the time the kids are in their mid-twenties, fully three out of four of these raised-religious kids are no longer attending services all that frequently*.

Now, it's true that kids from low-attendance upbringings are even less likely to become big churchgoers themselves by their mid-twenties. While one in four from high-attendance families are weekly churchgoers by their mid-twenties, only one in nine are weekly churchgoers when they come from families where neither parent attended services weekly. This results in a real correlation—sure enough, kids from high-attendance families are more likely to end up as high-attendance adults themselves. But that doesn't mean that most young adults from high-

attendance families end up "more or less reflexively" looking like their parents. Instead, three out of four have joined the ranks of those with low-attendance young-adult patterns.

Because we don't think people absorb their parents' religious practices by osmosis, we have instead tried to understand religious participation as something that is useful in some people's everyday lives but not in others'.[16] So here's a simple observation and a simple question. First the observation: When it comes to church attendance, developed countries are incredibly diverse. In the United States these days, for example, roughly 40% of adults never or hardly ever attend religious services while about 30% attend about once a week or more (and the other 30% attend at levels in between). And the simple question: What distinguishes those who go to church a lot from those who don't?

The big, distinguishing features, it turns out, involve sexual and reproductive lifestyles. People tend to go to church more when they are virgins or are married to the only person they've had sex with in their adult lives, when they rarely go to bars, and when they have more children. In short, people go to church more often when they have Ring-Bearer lifestyles. People tend to avoid church when they're in nonmarital cohabitation, when they're sexually active but never married, when they've had higher numbers of sex partners over time, when they go to bars pretty regularly, and when they have children out of wedlock. People, that is, more often eschew organized religion when they lead Freewheeler lifestyles.

Race, it turns out, also matters—African Americans go to church more than other Americans. But if you can ask someone just one question about their lives in order to guess how often the person attends religious services, you should simply ask (politeness permitting) how many people the person has slept with. In the GSS, the typical person who has had sex with five or more people in their adult life goes to church once a year; the typical person who has slept with none or only one person goes to church two or three times a month.

The roles of race and lifestyle in religious-service attendance are summarized in figure 4.2. These graphs show, for each group, the percentage attending religious services about once a year or less (the left-side bars), about once a week or more (the right-side bars), and somewhere

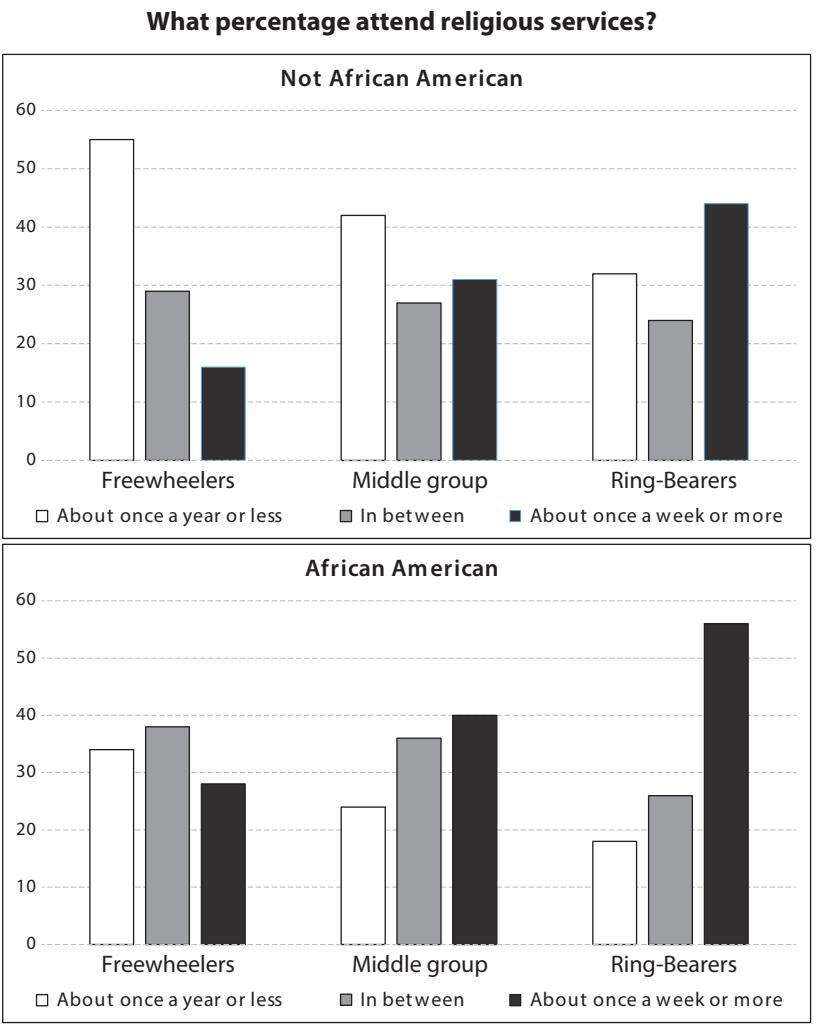

Figure 4.2 Religious service attendance by race and lifestyle category

in between (the middle bars). For non–African Americans who are Freewheelers, people are almost 3.5 times more likely to hardly ever attend services than to attend about weekly (55% versus 16%). For non-African Americans who are Ring-Bearers, in sharp contrast, people are more likely to be weekly attenders (44%) than very infrequent attenders

(32%). For African Americans, overall attendance rates are higher, but there are still big differences that depend on lifestyle. African Americans who are Freewheelers are a bit more likely to go very infrequently (34%) than about weekly (28%). But, African Americans who are Ring-Bearers are about three times more likely to be weekly attenders than very infrequent attenders (56% versus 18%).

In short, there are close relationships between people's sexual lifestyles and their religious participation. Most people, though, when they see these relationships, assume that the causal arrow points from religion to sex. Isn't the right explanation that people end up with Ring-Bearer lifestyles *because* they're religious?

Actually, no. Or, at a minimum, it's not that simple. Recall our discussion of young-adult attendance patterns. Roughly 40% of contemporary young adults were raised in high-attendance households. Three out of four in this group stopped attending this frequently by their mid-twenties. This leaves about 10% of people in their mid-twenties who were raised in high-attendance families and who are themselves attending services regularly. But then there's another group, almost as big, who are attending services regularly in their mid-twenties with parents who didn't attend religious services frequently when these children were in their teen years.

Why do so many individuals' level of religious worship change so much? We turned to the National Longitudinal Surveys of Youth 1997 (NLSY) to find out.[17] This is a great study that has followed a group of young people born in the early 1980s with yearly surveys starting in 1997, when the people in the sample were teenagers. Crucially, the survey asks respondents about sex, alcohol, drugs, cohabitation, marriage, and children, in addition to questions about church attendance. With the NLSY sample, then, we have a nice window onto how the big decline in young-adult church attendance happens.

The change is fairly straightforward. Around 40% of the people in the sample were raised in high-attendance households, but lots of these kids ended up partying, becoming sexually active before marriage, living in nonmarital cohabitation, and/or having kids outside of marriage. In such cases—that is, when, despite their high-attendance upbringings, they adopted Freewheeler lifestyles—they generally stopped going to

church. Most of the kids from high-attendance upbringings who retained the pattern chose strongly Ring-Bearer lifestyles—they mostly abstained from hard partying and premarital sex.

On the flip side, many kids from low-attendance households also pursued Freewheeler lifestyles. These kids were spectacularly unlikely to start attending services as young adults. But there were also plenty of kids from low-attendance upbringings who adopted Ring-Bearer lifestyles, and some (not most, but some) became far more religious than their parents. In fact, and we can't emphasize this enough, even with italics, *people raised in low-attendance households who spent their teens and early twenties with Ring-Bearer lifestyles were more likely to be attending services in their mid-twenties than people raised in high-attendance households who spent their teens and early twenties with Freewheeler lifestyles*. Still, it's true that those with Ring-Bearer lifestyles and low-attendance upbringings are much less likely to be frequent churchgoers than those with Ring-Bearer lifestyles and high-attendance upbringings.

In short, *as young people start making their own decisions about their lives, they tend to match their religious participation to their lifestyles*. Parental attendance does have an effect on whether their kids become Freewheelers or Ring-Bearers, but the effect becomes pretty small by the time people are in their mid-twenties.

The net result is that, yes, being raised one way or the other matters to some extent when it comes to religious attendance. Upbringing does have a small effect on the lifestyles people choose and, more importantly, Ring-Bearers are much more likely to *maintain* a high-attendance pattern from childhood than they are to develop such a pattern from scratch. But that's far and away not the whole story. Find the Freewheeler young adults, and you'll also find that, regardless of how they were raised, very few are attending church regularly. As Doug Kenrick put it when discussing his own transition from high-attendance upbringing to Freewheeler lifestyle in *Sex, Murder, and the Meaning of Life*: "If there was anything the nuns had really drummed into our heads, it was that sex was sinful. . . . I no longer wanted to feel guilty about sex, so I decided it was time to choose another set of beliefs."[18]

Religious groups in developed countries tend to serve the interests of high-commitment/high-fertility Ring-Bearers but not the interests of

low-commitment/low-fertility Freewheelers. In particular, first, religious groups often provide social insurance benefits and other club goods for attendees, including day care and schools for kids, and collections for hardships such as illness or loss of job. Second, religious groups often provide communities within communities, frequently united around anti-promiscuity morals. Modern religious groups are a pretty good deal for heterosexual, married, less promiscuous folks with more children, as well as for older people who are well past indulging in wilder lives. For others . . . not so much. As a result, we see that lots of parents go to church with their kids; later, if those kids become adults who themselves are Ring-Bearer types, the kids tend to stick with church (because it's a good deal for them); but if the kids set off in a Freewheeler direction, they drop church like a bad habit.

Attending church, then, can be thought of as a tool that helps some lifestyles but interferes with others. When people know how to use the tool (because they were raised religious) and have a use for the tool (because they are pursuing a Ring-Bearer lifestyle), then they use it. Others know how to use it (they were raised religious) but have no use for it (because they are pursuing Freewheeler lifestyles)—so they don't use it. Still others would perhaps find it useful, but didn't have the sort of childhood to know how useful it would be; such people don't often use it either. It isn't hard for Freewheeler types to figure out that they're going to get more hassles than benefits from most religious groups—even teenagers are able to work it out (including a young Doug Kenrick)—and that's basically all it takes to explain most of the connections we find between religiosity and lifestyles.

It's well known that church attendance strongly relates to the kinds of lifestyle policies we're discussing in this chapter—relative to people who don't go to church much, regular churchgoers are especially conservative on issues like premarital sex, pornography, abortion, birth control, and marijuana legalization. The usual explanation for this relationship is that those with conservative lifestyle views get them from religious upbringings and those with liberal lifestyle views get them from secular upbringings. But our read of the data is that the story is more complex. In particular, *much of the correspondence between these moral and political topics and religiosity results from young adults adjusting their religious*

patterns to their lifestyles. Many kids are raised religious, but when they adopt Freewheeler lifestyles that create incentives to adopt liberal lifestyle politics, *they stop being so religious*. A big part of the correlation between religiosity and politics derives not from people soaking up religious views like sponges, but from people rejecting religion when it interferes with their lifestyle.

So is church attendance a cause or an effect of anti-promiscuity opinions? Our view is that it's both. People with Ring-Bearer lifestyles, who have an interest in morally condemning promiscuity, are frequently drawn to organized religion. They embed their high-commitment/high-fertility families within supportive communities of like-minded, promiscuity-discouraging, materially supportive fellows. Church attendance is, then, an *effect* rather than a cause of conservative political views on lifestyle issues. But then attending church doubtless reinforces and creates additional coalitional interests in lifestyle conservatism, amplifying those views further in the direction they already leaned—to this extent, it's also a *cause*.

Divorce American Style

New Atheists commonly charge that religious people don't live up to their conservative norms. Here's Daniel Dennett in *Breaking the Spell*: "[W]hen it comes to 'family values,' the available evidence to date supports the hypothesis that brights [i.e., nonbelievers] have the lowest divorce rate in the United States, and born-again Christians the highest."[19]

One way to evaluate this claim is to ask what percentage of adults have divorced compared with the adult population as a whole, which includes people who have never been married in the first place. Data from the U.S. General Social Survey come close to supporting Dennett's claim: 34% of Christians who report a born-again experience have been divorced, compared with 28% of Christians without a born-again experience, 26% of the nonreligious, and only 20% of those in non-Christian religions.[20]

However, because these percentages are of divorced people relative to the entire adult population—including people who have never married—it seems perverse to calculate things this way. The interest, after all,

is in the extent to which people keep their commitments. This is closer to what typical readers have in mind when one uses the phrase "divorce rate": the chance that a given person will divorce *assuming the person gets married in the first place*. So a better question is to ask what percentage of ever-married people have ever divorced, putting aside people never married. This question gives a different answer: 44% of ever-married people with no religious affiliation have divorced, compared with 42% of ever-married born-again Christians, 37% of ever-married non-born-again Christians, and 29% of ever-married people who identify with a non-Christian religion.

Looked at in this more intuitive way, the "divorce rate" is actually *highest* among nonbelievers, though still pretty high among born-again Christians. The difference is driven by the fact that nonreligious people are more likely to never have been married in the first place—41% of adults with no religious affiliation have never been married, compared with only 20% of born-again Christians.

From just these figures, our sense is that claims like Dennett's are at best misleading, even if there are ways to make the claims technically kinda true. These claims are driven, we think, by a desire to engage in emotionally satisfying eye-poking.

A better look at religion in relation to divorce rates requires bearing a couple of additional points in mind. First, the connections between religiosity and lifestyles are more a matter of religious *involvement* (e.g., service attendance) than religious *labels* (e.g., calling oneself "Christian" or "born-again"). One's denomination matters less than one's level of participation. Second, education plays a key role. Christians are far more likely to identify as "born-again" (or "fundamentalist" or "evangelical") at lower education levels, and, importantly, people at lower education levels are more likely to get divorced (in large part because they tend to marry younger and are more likely to have children before marriage). In a related point, highly educated folks who don't attend religious services are more likely to say they have no religious affiliation than are less educated folks who don't attend religious services—people with less education are strongly likely to keep calling themselves "Christians" (including lots of "born-again" Christians) despite the fact that their everyday lives have very little religious about them. Thus, comparisons singling out the

"born-again" versus those with "no religion" (as Dennett's did) stack the deck with folks with less education versus folks with more education.

So, looking only at those who have ever married, and breaking it out by education, what's the likelihood that someone has been divorced?

- People with bachelor's degrees:
  - 24% of those who attend services weekly.
  - 33% of those who identify with a religion but do not attend services weekly.
  - 39% of those who do not identify with a religion.
- People who do not have bachelor's degrees:
  - 33% of those who attend services weekly.
  - 47% of those who identify with a religion but do not attend services weekly.
  - 50% of those who do not identify with a religion.

Put this way, it becomes clear that there's a nice relationship between religious participation and staying together, with education giving an added bump across the board. Not only are religious people more likely to have married in the first place, but those who have married are also less likely to have divorced. As we've been saying, religious worshipers are more likely to have Ring-Bearer lifestyles.

The more interesting question, to us, is whether these connections indicate that religious involvement is truly a *cause* of increased marital stability. Maybe. Another possibility, which we have raised, is self-selection: Ring-Bearers seek out religious groups while Freewheelers avoid them. The right answer probably involves both ideas—Ring-Bearers seek out churches (so going to church is in part an *effect* of being less likely to divorce), but then churches provide social environments that help stabilize marriages.

The Politics of Sex and Reproduction

We're now ready to take a broader look at the demographic predictors of views on premarital sex, pornography, abortion, teen birth control, and marijuana legalization (more details can be found in the Data Ap-

pendix for Chapter 4). The most important predictors include both religious variables and lifestyle variables, but the single dominant factor is frequency of church attendance. Of the roughly 7% of American adults who regularly attend services more than once a week, fully 83% believe that premarital sex is always or almost always wrong. About seven in ten of these super-attenders think pornography should be illegal. Fewer than 15% approve of abortion in cases motivated by not wanting more children, by being poor, or by being single, and only about four in ten approve of legal abortion for rape or fetal deformity. About seven in ten think birth control should be unavailable to teenagers without parental consent. Fewer than one in five would legalize marijuana.

By far the most liberal profile comes from people who are not Christian (mostly including people with no religious affiliation, but also including Jews, Buddhists, etc.), attend services less than about once a week, have at least a high school education, and have had at least five sex partners in their adult lifetimes—in other words, people who are less religious, have Freewheeler lifestyles, and have at least a modest amount of education. For this group, eight in ten say premarital sex is not wrong at all; nine in ten think pornography should be legally available to adults; around three-quarters support legal abortion in every circumstance; almost eight in ten think teens should have access to birth control even when their parents disagree; and at least three-quarters support marijuana legalization. We admit that this category includes us and most of our friends and, yeah, these numbers sound about right.

Most groups are, of course, between the extremes of super-attenders and Freewheeling non-Christians. Among the less extreme conservatives when it comes to lifestyle issues are people who usually go to church "only" about once a week, who have more lifestyle diversity than the super-attenders. Weekly churchgoers who have married and have had few sex partners (i.e., who lean toward being Ring-Bearers) are more conservative on lifestyle issues than those who are either never married or have had five or more sex partners since age eighteen (i.e., who lean toward being Freewheelers). Weekly attending Freewheelers hold views that are pretty conservative overall but less consistent: About four in ten think premarital sex is always or almost always wrong; about four in ten think pornography should be illegal; only about three in ten

support legal abortion for those not wanting more children, who are poor, or who are single; roughly half disapprove of birth control for teens without parental consent; only around a third would legalize marijuana. Weekly attending Ring-Bearers hold views that are somewhere in between these Freewheeling weekly attenders and the super-conservative super-attenders.

Among the less extreme liberals on these issues are people who are not Christian, have less than weekly attendance, and have high school diplomas—but who have fewer than five adult lifetime sex partners. For these less Freewheeling non-Christians, positions on lifestyle issues are pretty liberal overall, but in each case somewhere in the neighborhood of 10 points less liberal than their more Freewheeling analogues (so, e.g., instead of nine in ten supporting legal pornography, only eight in ten do). Among Christians who don't go to church weekly and have high school diplomas (or more education), the results depend a bit on age—the seniors in this group are almost as conservative as the weekly attending Freewheelers we looked at earlier, while the younger folks (especially those with more education) are almost as liberal as less Freewheeling non-Christians. People who both don't go to church weekly and don't have high school diplomas are on average in the middle in their views on all these lifestyle issues, except abortion, about which they have generally conservative views.

International Comparisons

We close out our empirical work in this and the next two chapters by briefly comparing the United States with the rest of the world. Here, we use the World Values Survey (WVS)—an international database with around three hundred thousand individuals from over ninety countries—which has put similar questions to people around the world over the past few decades, though with fewer consistently repeated demographic details than the GSS.

In one of our studies, using this source of data, we looked at how religiosity relates to sexual and reproductive morals in comparison with cooperative morals (such as injunctions against lying and stealing).[21]

Overall, we found that the worldwide connection between religiosity and sexual and reproductive morals (relating to casual sex, abortion, divorce, recreational drugs, etc.) is really strong, and that, once we take this connection into account, cooperative morals don't indicate anything further about who is more or less religious. The least religious people worldwide, really, are those who think there's nothing wrong with Freewheeler lifestyles but who still disapprove of lying and stealing—they're Freewheelers, but not anarchists or sociopaths.

Drilling down in more detail, we found that less developed countries tend to have lots of religious people (except in places like China, where there has been recent state suppression of religions) and lots of lifestyle conservatives, but the individual-level relationship between religiosity and lifestyle conservatism isn't that strong. In modern developed countries around the world, in contrast, there's a lot of diversity in both religiosity and in sexual and reproductive views, and the individual-level relationship is very strong. That is, people in developed countries aren't routinely religious, but when they are, they tend to have conservative views on sexual and reproductive lifestyle issues in particular.

The WVS, happily, has frequently measured views on abortion. Overall, people in the Western world outside of the United States hold the most liberal views on abortion on average, those in the non-Western world hold the most conservative views on abortion on average, and those in the United States tend to be in the middle on average. Of course, all these regions contain people all over the map on abortion, but the averages differ significantly.

As in our earlier look at American views on abortion, across the world, people who are less religious and more educated tend to be substantially more liberal on abortion than people who are more religious and less educated. Among the most religious and least educated, in particular, there's not much difference between Western and non-Western countries on abortion attitudes—such folks tend to be against abortion in the United States, in other Western countries, and in the rest of the world. (We present more details in the Data Appendix for Chapter 4.)

The biggest differences are among those who are less religious and more educated. In Western countries, such individuals tend strongly to be pro-choice. Outside of Western countries, such individuals are

scattered around the center on abortion. Overall, then, there's more variation in views in the Western than the non-Western world as a function of religiosity and education, but the directions of this variation are similar worldwide.

One Step at a Time

We have tried to convey a set of simple ideas in this chapter: There are strong connections among sexual and reproductive lifestyles, sexual and reproductive interests, and sexual and reproductive politics. These connections have been widely overlooked primarily because of how strongly each of these also connects with religion. The common assumption has been that religion is the Great Initiator of the Causal Chain. This assumption looms so large that people rarely ask *why* religion has the connections it has.

As we have tried to show, debates that can seem to involve the least rational aspect of politics—issues about when life begins, or what God thinks about sex, or whether "victimless" misdemeanors like promiscuous sex or pornography or marijuana should be morally condemned or criminalized—are comprehensible once the old assumptions are abandoned and attention is paid to the right kinds of lifestyle factors. People with Freewheeler lifestyles often have interests advanced by avoiding churches and minimizing the moral and legal costs of their Freewheeler lifestyles. People with Ring-Bearer lifestyles often have interests advanced by affiliating with churches and supporting moral and legal restrictions that make Freewheeling more costly or difficult.

It does little good to try to explain how the kinds of stories people themselves use to advance their own policy positions lead them to the positions they have—those stories are press releases, issued by the Public Relations Departments of their minds. Believing that those stories are true glimpses into the back offices of their minds is tantamount to a political reporter passing along the canned statements of a press secretary as true glimpses into an administration's internal meetings.

As we mentioned earlier in the book, people often talk about "liberals" and "conservatives" as though there are basically two kinds of

people, even though, in reality, people regularly hold idiosyncratic mixtures of liberal and conservative views. Based on what we've covered in this chapter, the conclusion isn't that people who go to church a lot and have Ring-Bearer lifestyles are usually conservative, for example, but that *they're usually conservative specifically on sexual and reproductive lifestyle issues*. For other issues, the underlying strategic interests will differ, as will the demographic features that matter. How much people go to church, how many people they sleep with, how often they go to bars—these features may indicate a great deal about people's views on sexual and reproductive items, but they're not going to indicate very much about, for example, who supports liberal immigration policies or race-based affirmative action. Instead, the demographic stars of this chapter will become bit players in the productions that follow, as some bit players from this chapter take their star turns.

CHAPTER 6

Money Matters: Redistribution and Hard-Times Programs

A typical American with a graduate degree—MA, MBA, MD, JD, PhD, and so on—lives in a household with income greater than $100,000 a year (for everyone else, median household income is less than $60,000 a year). Yet recall from chapter 1 that the 2012 exit polls showed that Obama won among those with graduate degrees by 13 points while Romney won among those with incomes of $100,000 or more by 10 points. People with lots of education tend to have higher incomes, but the two have opposite influences on party votes.

The ways each side complains about the other side's "elites" highlight this contrast. From the right, the complaints are about educational elites whose big-city, Ivy League, cultural bubble makes them hopelessly out of touch with "real" Americans. Case in point: In 2008, Barack Obama appeared at a fund-raiser in San Francisco (of course, San Francisco!) and made his oft-repeated "bitter" comment:

> You go into some of these small towns in Pennsylvania, and like a lot of small towns in the Midwest, the jobs have been gone now for twenty-five years and nothing's replaced them. And they fell through the Clinton administration, and the Bush administration, and each successive administration has said that somehow these communities are gonna regenerate and they have not. So it's not surprising then that they get bitter, they cling to guns or religion or antipathy to people who aren't like them or anti-immigrant sentiment or anti-trade sentiment as a way to explain their frustrations.

From the left, the complaints are about wealthy elites whose country-club, Wall Street, economic bubble makes them hopelessly out of touch with the middle class. Case in point: At a 2012 fund-raiser hosted by a

hedge fund manager (of course, a hedge fund manager!), Mitt Romney made his oft-repeated "47 percent" comment:

> There are 47 percent of the people who will vote for the president no matter what. All right, there are 47 percent who are with him, who are dependent upon government, who believe that they are victims, who believe that government has a responsibility to care for them, who believe that they are entitled to health care, to food, to housing, to you name it. That that's an entitlement. And the government should give it to them. And they will vote for this president no matter what. And I mean, the president starts off with 48, 49, 48—he starts off with a huge number. These are people who pay no income tax—47 percent of Americans pay no income tax. So our message of low taxes doesn't connect. And he'll be out there talking about tax cuts for the rich. I mean that's what they sell every four years. And so my job is not to worry about those people. I'll never convince them that they should take personal responsibility and care for their lives.

New York Times columnist Ross Douthat made the essential point when comparing Obama's "bitter" comments with Romney's "47 percent" dismissal:

> In both cases, a presidential candidate was speaking about poorer people to a room full of rich people; in both cases, he was pandering to those rich people's fearful stereotypes about a way of life that they don't understand or share.
>
> For rich Republicans, the stereotype is all about the money: They have it, other Americans don't, and those resentful, entitled others might just have enough votes to wage class warfare and redistribute the donors' hard-earned millions to the indolent and irresponsible.
>
> For rich Democrats, the stereotype is all about the culture wars: They think they've built an enlightened society, liberated from archaic beliefs and antique hang-ups, and yet these Jesus freaks in flyover country are mobilizing to restore the patriarchy.
>
> Both groups of donors seem to be haunted by dystopian scenarios in which the masses rise up and tear down everything the upper class has built. For Republicans, the dystopia is (inevitably) "Atlas Shrugged." For liberals, it's one part "Turner Diaries," one part "Handmaid's Tale."[1]

Douthat may have characterized both sides as "rich people," but the key to contrasting "elite" views in politics is the distinction between education on the one hand and income on the other. These are correlated, of course, but people's education (more broadly, human capital) and income have different influences on people's favored policies.[2] In the previous chapter, we explored how high levels of human capital lead to preferences that human capital be allowed to flourish unfettered by old-school group barriers, and, in chapter 4, we noted that higher education is associated with liberal views on abortion. These kinds of issues are what Douthat was referring to in contrasting "an enlightened society" with "archaic beliefs and antique hang-ups." Back in chapter 2, when we did some fact-checking of self-interest-denying claims, we found that richer people are more likely to oppose income redistribution and poorer people are more likely to support it. These sorts of issues underlie Douthat's comments about "class warfare" feared by Republican elites.

And so both sides complain about different sorts of "elites" who themselves complain about different downscale constituencies. Ivy League latte-sippers belittle uneducated hicks who want to retain all their group-based advantages. Mustache-twirling robber barons belittle poor, lazy moochers who want to redistribute—take—the nation's wealth.

In this chapter, we'll focus on issues about which the upper crust is particularly conservative, including tax-and-spend, social safety nets, entitlements, welfare, health care, and so on. As we've noted already, views on these issues relate to people's income levels. But there's more to it than just income.

We'll be talking a lot about "poorer" and "richer" people. People's views of income are often skewed. Recall how easy it is, for example, to overestimate how "wild" most college kids are (because the wilder kids are more visible) or to overestimate how many Americans have college degrees (because most of our readers probably hang out in circles in which most people are college educated). For similar reasons, it's easy to overestimate what counts as "richer" or "wealthier" in the United States. One would think, for example, that the top 10% of households surely count as "richer" or "wealthier" than most others; it would be weird to call people in the top 10% "middle class."

But the top 10% of American households includes those with more than $150,000 in total yearly income (combining the income from everyone in the household).[3] The top 5% of American households includes those with more than $192,000 in yearly income. For households with only one person, the middle 50% includes incomes around $14,000 to $49,000. For households with two people, the middle range is around $31,000 to $95,000. For households with three or more people, it's $38,000 to $115,000. The reality is pretty far removed from national political conversations that seem to agree that no family making less than $250,000 could plausibly count as wealthy.

In contrast, when we talk about "richer" or "wealthier" people in this book, we're not talking just about the top 1%. We're talking about people who are in the higher-but-not-necessarily-stratospheric percentiles (e.g., top 20%, top 10%)—even though most of those folks probably don't think of themselves as "rich" at all.

It's Not Just People Currently Submerged Who Want Flood Insurance

Government finances are, in a word, complex. The $2.5 *trillion* in federal revenue in 2012 came from an array of sources, about $1.1 trillion from individual income taxes, $845 billion from payroll taxes (Social Security and Medicare), and the rest from corporate income taxes, federal sales taxes on gasoline and other items, gift and estate taxes, and other sources. The other side of the equation, expenditures, are, of course, dizzying in their variety, ranging from the military to interest on the debt to the great ape enclosure at the National Zoo.

Some government programs are viewed as "public goods" that benefit everyone more or less equally, though it's difficult to identify satisfyingly pure examples of such programs in practice. Spending on highways might benefit everyone, but provide greater relative benefits to those whose livelihoods are more dependent on highway travel. Spending on mass transit follows the same logic. Defense is a typical example of a "public good," given that citizens are more or less equally protected by

the armed forces. But defense firms and their employees particularly gain with larger military budgets, not to mention the fact that the military disproportionately hires middle-class males.

Other government programs are more clearly skewed, particularly those relating to safety nets. Welfare, Medicaid (health care for the poor), and food assistance, for example, are generally means-tested, directly helping the poor. Even programs that are not means-tested—unemployment insurance, Social Security, Medicare (health care for the elderly), etc.—help poorer people more, relative to income, than wealthier people.

Whether means-tested or not, safety-net programs are available in theory to citizens over the course of their lives, with some programs most likely to benefit poorer people at prime working and child-rearing ages, and others limited to benefiting the elderly. Such programs act, essentially, as insurance policies. If a person loses their job and doesn't have other income, the government will step in with temporary assistance. Even programs for the elderly work this way—the benefits are paid based primarily on simply being elderly, but act particularly as a buffer to prevent ill-prepared seniors from slipping into deep poverty or placing heavy burdens on family members.

A key point about insurance programs is that people tend to favor them not only when those programs would provide payouts *right now*, but also because the programs might benefit them *in the future*. Consider flood insurance. Suppose the federal government were to have a new program that used general tax revenue to compensate anyone who lost property in a flood. People whose homes were not currently underwater wouldn't receive any payments from the government today, but would stand to benefit if their homes were flooded in the future. People most at risk from flooding are the ones most likely to favor such a program. And if they can get the benefits while distributing the costs among taxpayers generally, without having to purchase private flood insurance, then all the better for them.

Some discussions in political science are presented as though it's something other than "self-interest" when people who are not poor today favor programs meant to help the poor, or when people who are

not sick today favor programs subsidizing health care, or when people who are not old today support programs providing substantial benefits for the elderly. But this is equivalent to saying that only those underwater right now benefit from flood insurance. Most of the programs people think of as redistributive act as a kind of hard-times insurance. The question, then, isn't only who is experiencing hard times now, but who expects the possibility of hard times in the future.

These expectations depend on any number of factors. An educated reporter working in the print media might be well qualified and have many years of experience, but the nature of the industry might cause concern about long-term employment prospects.

Other factors that might reasonably affect expectations, however, are less idiosyncratic. Income obviously matters in deciding whether one might need hard-times programs in the future. Those who have extended periods with high incomes are more likely to save up money, a kind of self-insurance. Those with more modest incomes might not qualify for government assistance today, but probably have less savings, creating greater potential need for hard-times programs in the future. That is, when people with lots of savings and people with little savings experience a significant drop in income, both experience "hard times," but those with little savings have more need for gap-filling insurance to get them through it.

Education clearly relates to the likelihood of experiencing hard times. People with more education not only tend to have higher incomes, but also tend to have substantially lower unemployment rates. Less education, then, on average increases the potential need for hard-times programs in the future.

Gender is also a significant factor when it comes to hard times. Currently, most of the poorest American families are single women with young children. When married, of course, men and women by definition have identical family incomes. For single people, gender differences in income derive from a variety of sources. One source is that women are simply on average paid less than men, even for similar work. In addition, women are more likely than men to work part-time or not at all when they have young children, and women are more likely to be raising

children as single parents than are men. These factors decrease women's average time in the labor force, which diminishes their long-term economic prospects. These effects have been widely studied, for example, in cases of divorce, which frequently substantially diminishes a woman's standard of living but not a man's.[4] Overall, then, women (including women currently married) have a greater potential need for hard-times programs in the future than do men on average.

Age introduces additional complexities. Before FDR's New Deal and LBJ's Great Society, the poorest Americans were often the elderly. This is no longer true. Today, both the elderly and young adults have lower work-based incomes than middle-aged individuals on average, but the elderly are subsidized by Social Security and Medicare while the young are not. Most programs helping non-elderly adults are either time-limited (unemployment benefits), means-tested (Medicaid and food assistance), or both (welfare benefits). And the benefits for the elderly far outpace the benefits for the poor. According to 2012 data, the average retired worker received over $1,200 per month from Social Security.[5] In contrast, the typical family with two children on welfare (these days known as Temporary Assistance for Needy Families or TANF) received only $412 a month.[6] Further, since the push for welfare reform in the Clinton years, TANF benefits have had significant strings attached and typically cannot be received for more than five years across an individual's lifetime. (Continued talk of lifetimes of dependency are mostly a myth, at least when it comes to federal TANF benefits.) If seniors and younger single mothers are asked a question about whether "government should be doing more for the poor," one should expect different answers if only because the status quo so heavily favors seniors.

Compounding the age issue is the fact that Social Security and Medicare are often seen—incorrectly—as earned benefits rather than redistribution programs. Most seniors collect substantially more in benefits from these programs than they ever paid in payroll taxes.[7] Further, the amount that seniors collect has much more to do with how long they live and the health problems they develop than it does with how much they paid in taxes. Nonetheless, the mistaken impression that these programs represent earned benefits has led to widely repeated, and

surprisingly real, examples of seniors telling their government representatives to "keep your government hands off my Medicare."[8] This kind of thinking affects many seniors' views on government programs generally.

In sum, who has a greater and lesser potential need for hard-times programs in the future? Those with a greater need include poorer people, people with less education, women, and the elderly. Those with a lesser need include richer people, people with more education, men, and the middle-aged. The crucial caveat is that elderly people, though more in need, are largely having their essential needs met by existing government hard-times programs, even if many of them don't see it that way.

Public versus Private

Often the fight over safety nets is phrased in terms of liberals preferring government programs and conservatives preferring private charity. This captures something important. Some people might oppose taxpayer-funded hard-times programs because they don't see a need for hard-times insurance at all. Others, in contrast, might want such insurance to exist, but prefer it to be privately rather than publicly provided.

Private hard-times insurance typically means that individuals rely on family, communities, and charities for assistance. Many churches, for instance, provide hard-times assistance for their members, taking up collections and helping out in the event of a lost job or spousal death. In the 2012 campaign, Mitt Romney alluded to another source of private insurance for young people when he told supporters at an Ohio college: "We've always encouraged young people—take a shot, go for it, take a risk and get the education, borrow money if you have to from your parents, start a business." (There go those out-of-touch elites again, assuming that everyone's parents have piles of cash lying around.)

So, part of why someone might support taxpayer-funded, publicly provided hard-times programs is that a person needs or might need hard-times assistance. Another factor is that the person would get a better deal with public rather than private hard-times insurance. This relates to the relative costs and benefits of both. In some ways, the points

about public versus private just reinforce the basic socioeconomic point that richer people with richer families and richer friends and richer communities have less need for hard-times insurance, and also less need for this to be public rather than private.

Beyond wealth, other demographic factors relate to the relative attractiveness of private versus public hard-times insurance. There's a lot more private money available in social networks and charities controlled by white Christians than among racial minorities and non-Christians. Based on the findings from earlier chapters, it is likely that these networks and charities often have some level of preference for beneficiaries that match their demographics. Federal programs, on the other hand, don't discriminate on the basis of race, religion, or sexual orientation. The result is that white, heterosexual Christians as compared with others at equivalent income levels will have similar average needs for hard-times insurance, but members of the two groups will have dissimilar average interests regarding the extent to which such insurance should be provided by the government.

Another complicating factor involves immigration status. Immigrants are, on average, poorer. But immigrants are also often excluded from public hard-times programs. Undocumented immigrants are excluded from practically all hard-times programs. And even legal immigrants face significant restrictions; sometimes they qualify for federal dollars, but often they do not. (The relevant rules are complex and involve factors like length of lawful residency and U.S. military service.) On the whole, then, some immigrants might be in the position of favoring redistribution, but not necessarily favoring specific programs from which they and their families are excluded.

Other People's Money, Other People's Programs

Finally, there is one more piece we'll add to the puzzle of economic policy interests: who is paying for whom. In one sense, the point is simple—richer people pay more but poorer people receive more benefits. The U.S. tax system is incredibly complex, but, generally speaking, though there are obviously exceptions, richer people are taxed at higher rates

than poorer people (even taking into account payroll taxes and state and local taxes), and self-employed people are taxed at higher rates than those who are employed by others (mostly because the self-employed pay both the employer and employee halves of their payroll taxes).

In other times and places, class cut the contours of society, and the primary social divisions might have been between a wealthier, landowning, legally privileged class and a poorer, wage-earning, legally restricted class. In these cases, the "us" paying for "them" would be summed up with income and class. In the contemporary United States, however, political divisions based on race, immigration, and religion are at least as important as those based on income, and certainly more important than those based on Old World notions of class.

When Americans think of their chief political opponents, they don't always think in terms of income or class. Religious conservatives, for example, often consider their main opponents to be secular liberals with Freewheeler lifestyles. Such conservatives are particularly irked when they feel they are being asked to use tax money to subsidize their competitors' abortions or religion-mocking, homosexual-celebrating artists. Ivy League liberals usually take their main opponents to be those who want to erect the kinds of group-based barriers discussed in chapter 5. These high-human-capital liberals are particularly irked when asked to use tax money to subsidize the military, an institution they often see as a central proponent of sexist, homophobic, xenophobic, Islamophobic persons and policies.

In the 1960s, the United States sought both to expand public hard-times programs and to eliminate discrimination that in earlier times would have directed the benefits of public and private hard-times programs disproportionately toward whites. The resistance of working-class whites formed the core of Republicans' subsequent Southern Strategy, which sought to peel them away from FDR's New Deal coalition.

In part because of these efforts, "welfare" has become associated with racial minorities and has been generally demonized, from Ronald Reagan's complaints about Chicago "welfare queens" in the 1970s to a 2013 contestant on the U.S. version of the reality show *Big Brother*, who referred to welfare as "[n-word] insurance." These group-based dynamics contribute to odd-looking survey results: while 68% of Americans think

government should spend more on "the poor," only 23% think government should spend more on "welfare."

The connection between welfare and race can be viewed from multiple perspectives. To take one point of view, a similar number of African American households and white households receive TANF benefits: in 2010, for example, 32% of TANF households were white, 32% were African American, and 30% were Latino American.[9] Looked at another way, though, African Americans and Latino Americans are overrepresented among TANF recipients—in 2010, only around 13% of U.S. households were African American and around the same percentage were Latino.

The racial element adds additional complexity to understanding Americans' economic policy positions, particularly with respect to race and human capital.[10] For racial minorities low in human capital, the major arrows point in the same direction, toward support for robust public hard-times programs. These are individuals who, on average, have greater need for hard-times insurance, have limited private support (which makes publicly provided programs more attractive), and favor programs that disproportionately help minority families. But for whites low in human capital, the arrows diverge. Greater need for hard-times insurance? Yes. Preference for public over private programs? Maybe, maybe not. Group-based reasons to *oppose* public hard-times programs? Yes.

The Complex Demography of American Economic Views

The following summarizes our points on economic interests:

- Income: Wealthier people generally have less need for hard-times insurance, disproportionately pay for public programs, and have better access to private help. Wealthier people, then, tend to show greater opposition than poorer people to redistributive policies and public hard-times programs.
- Race: Whites tend to be wealthier, have better access to private support networks, and are more likely to have group-based reasons

to oppose programs that disproportionately benefit minorities. Whites, then, tend to show greater opposition than minorities to public hard-times programs.[11]

- Immigration: Immigrants are often poorer and have diminished private support, but also are often explicitly excluded from public hard-times programs.
- Religion and sexual orientation: Religious groups often provide private support that makes public programs less needed.[12] Non-Christians and lesbians/gays/bisexuals (a combination we're referring to as "Heathens") are less likely to have access to reliable private support insofar as the greatest levels of nongovernmental support tend to come from Christian groups. Further, when they have higher levels of human capital, white Heathens are likely to adopt human-capital-based stances minimizing the relevance of group identities—they typically view their chief political opponents not as racial minorities, but as those who want to impose group-based barriers.
- Gender: Women potentially need hard-times programs more than men on average, and so tend to support these programs to a greater degree.
- Self-employment: The self-employed generally face higher tax burdens than those employed by others, and so tend to support public programs less.
- Education: Education is complex. Increased education decreases the need for hard-times insurance, but also decreases group-based racial objections to public programs among whites.
- Age: Age is also complex. Being older increases the need for hard-times insurance. But robust public programs already exist and are often viewed not as governmental assistance but as earned benefits. Many seniors may have "low income" in an important sense; at the same time, they have entitlement security that obscures the extent to which their lives depend on redistributive largesse.

We now turn to the data on economic issues from the U.S. General Social Survey. (We provide the details in the Data Appendix for Chapter 6.) Across a range of economic issues, the main story involves race and income. On most issues, the most liberal views tend to be held by

lower income minorities and the most conservative by high-income whites.

But other factors add interesting side themes. Take religion. If one begins by looking at the tenets of the New Testament, with its emphasis on forgoing wealth and giving aid to the poor and the sick, one might predict that being Christian would lead to more support for programs that move wealth from rich to poor. If, however, one sees religion less for its dogmatic properties and more for its role in people's social lives (including religious groups' provision of private hard-times assistance), then religious involvement should, somewhat perversely, predict *less* support for public hard-times programs. Indeed, white, heterosexual Christians are generally the most conservative on economic issues; white Heathens are less conservative, but still well more conservative than racial minorities on average. This is not to say that being Christian makes one stingy; rather, it tends to lead to a degree of relative preference for private over public support.

White, heterosexual Christians with smaller incomes—especially when they are raising children—tend to express economic views that are almost as liberal as those of racial minorities. Such people, of course, are much more likely to be among those eligible for TANF and food-assistance programs, and it shows in their support for redistribution and hard-times programs. At higher income ranges, white, heterosexual Christians tend to be very conservative, particularly when (1) their income levels are especially high, (2) they're self-employed, and/or (3) they're seniors.

Latinos and Asians with less education and from immigrant families show the unusual pattern we addressed earlier: strong support for liberal policies on generally worded questions (e.g., whether there should be more support for the poor as a general matter), but very conservative views on whether government programs should receive more funding. In contrast, Latino and Asian Americans with native-born parents (who qualify for public programs to the same degree as other citizens, of course) tend to hold generally liberal economic views, and especially support government spending on specific areas.

We'll go through a few details of the GSS data. Of all the issue opinions discussed in this book, the one that correlates most strongly with people's political party affiliations is this one: "Some people think that

the government in Washington ought to reduce the income differences between the rich and the poor, perhaps by raising the taxes of wealthy families or by giving income assistance to the poor. Others think that the government should not concern itself with reducing this income difference between the rich and the poor." Respondents are then asked to identify their own views on a scale that ranges from "the government ought to reduce the income differences between rich and poor" to "the government should not concern itself with reducing income differences."

The best single demographic predictor for this item is family income. Recall from chapter 2 that, comparing those in the bottom 20% of family income, the middle 20%, and the top 10%, 57% of the poorest group lean left of center in their responses, dropping to 49% of those in the middle, and dropping further to only 30% of those in the wealthiest group. The next best demographic predictor is race, with whites more opposed to redistribution than minorities on average, even after taking income into account.

But a range of other factors also predicts opinions on government redistribution. For example, other things being equal, people in union households are a bit more liberal than others on redistribution, and people in self-employed households are a bit more conservative than others.

An interesting bit of complexity involves religion and human capital. Other things being equal, non-Christians with high levels of human capital (e.g., graduate degrees) are unusually liberal when it comes to government redistribution. In contrast, Christians with upper-middle levels of human capital (e.g., bachelor's degrees but not graduate degrees) are unusually conservative. In both of these cases, the "other things being equal" is important because many highly educated non-Christians are wealthier whites, and their wealthy whiteness predicts substantially increased conservatism. The net result is that highly educated, white non-Christians typically wind up in the center on economic issues (influenced by both the left-leaning features of being non-Christians with high levels of human capital and the right-leaning features of being generally wealthier whites). But when it comes to wealthier, white Christians with bachelor's degrees, the conservative volume is dialed up to 10. Add self-employment, and—like Nigel's amp in *Spinal Tap*—these go to 11.

Across a range of redistribution and public hard-times policy views, other major factors show up as well. Lesbians, gays, and bisexuals tend to hold more liberal views than heterosexuals, particularly on government help for health care and the poor. Women, other things being equal, are a bit more liberal than men, particularly on government spending levels. In this case, "other things being equal" underestimates the differences between women and men because women also tend to have lower incomes (especially lower personal incomes) than men. Put another way, part of what makes women more liberal on economic issues than men is their lower average incomes, but another part is simply gender itself.

Seniors tend to hold more conservative views than younger people, particularly on government spending levels. Perhaps most oddly, other things being equal, seniors are more conservative on funding for Social Security. This requires some unpacking. The real difference is not that seniors favor cutting spending on Social Security—in fact, they're a bit less likely to favor cutting it than younger people. But when it comes to "keep it the same as is" versus "spend more," seniors are more likely to favor leaving it as is, while middle-aged people—people who typically do not yet receive any Social Security benefits—skew heavily toward wanting the government to spend more. One interpretation is that those currently excluded from the Promised Land feel its benefits are insufficiently generous, while those who have arrived often know firsthand that, hey, it's a pretty good deal as is.

Taking the various factors together, a reasonably clear picture emerges. Often the largest contrast is between, on the one hand, white, heterosexual Christians with family incomes in the top 10% and, on the other hand, African Americans. The former oppose rather than support government redistribution generally by 58% versus 25%; the latter support rather than oppose government redistribution generally by 59% versus 18%. Among African Americans, support for increased government spending is strong: 89% support increased spending on the poor (though only 38% on "welfare"), 84% support increased spending on education, 82% support increased spending on healthcare, 77% support increased spending on Social Security, and 71% support increased spending on child care. For white, heterosexual Christians with family incomes in the top 10%, in contrast, levels of support for increased spending are much lower, though not nearly as low as the congressional

prototypes would suggest: 72% support increased spending on education, 59% support increased spending on health care, 53% support increased spending on the poor (though only 12% on "welfare"), 46% support increased spending on Social Security, and 43% support increased spending on child care. Indeed, the only case in which a majority of this demographic group generally prefers *less* spending is when support for the poor is phrased specifically as "welfare"—otherwise they tend to fall mostly in the "more" or "as is" categories.

Among white Heathens with top 10% incomes, views are generally less conservative than those of their heterosexual, Christian neighbors. The bigger differences tend to be on generally worded items rather than spending specifics. For example, should the government be *taking action* to help the poor? Among rich whites, only a bit over half of heterosexual Christians say yes but it's closer to three-quarters of Heathens. Consider, however, another item: Should the government be *spending more* on the poor? For this question there's very little difference between rich, white, heterosexual Christians, and rich, white Heathens—a bit over half say government should spend more. In general, on spending issues, the gap among rich whites between heterosexual Christians and Heathens runs from roughly 10 points (e.g., on health care spending) to basically 0 (e.g., on child care spending).

White, heterosexual Christians are sometimes about as liberal as minorities on economic issues, at least among those who have less income, who have children, and who are not seniors. Among people in this group, average views on redistribution and hard-times programs are almost as liberal as those of African Americans. Moving up the income ladder, white, heterosexual Christians with upper-middle incomes from the fortieth to ninetieth percentiles tend to have center-right economic views, and are often particularly conservative among seniors and the self-employed. Among these individuals who are not seniors and not self-employed, they split relatively evenly on the overall measure of support for government income redistribution and otherwise have views on spending areas very close to overall American averages.

Recall that Latinos and Asians with less education and from immigrant families have an unusual mix of views on economic issues. These individuals often support income redistribution the most, but support

increased spending on education and health care the least (on these latter issues, to be clear, they are even to the right of rich whites on average). So are these immigrants liberal or conservative on economic issues? Does that question even make sense here? Instead of focusing on these kinds of labels, we're encouraging a more practical viewpoint, one that, in this particular case, points to the simple fact that many immigrants are poorer but nonetheless excluded from the benefits of specific public programs.

American Exceptionalism

As in previous chapters, we conclude by looking at data from the World Values Survey. The WVS has included items about general views on economic redistribution and government services, and we combined these into an overall measure of the kinds of economic views we have covered in this chapter. (More details can be found in the Data Appendix for Chapter 6.)

Overall, outside of Western countries, income and education both contribute substantially to general economic policy preferences. Those who are wealthier (relative to others in their respective countries) and have more education are more conservative on economic issues; those who are poorer and have less education are more liberal. In Western countries, however, while income is a substantial predictor of economic views, education is not—people with higher incomes and more education, for example, tend to be about as conservative on average as those who have higher incomes and less education. We saw this in our earlier analyses of U.S. views, in which income was a major contributor to economic opinions, but education mattered only weakly and in roundabout ways. It turns out that this is generally true of Western countries.

Views on economic policy are, on the whole, more conservative in Western countries than in non-Western countries. Nonetheless, opinions are actually quite similar at higher income and education levels around the world. The real differences emerge at lower socioeconomic ranges. Specifically, individuals with lower socioeconomic status hold substantially more liberal views on economic policies outside of the

West than in Western countries, and particularly more liberal than in the United States.

In sum, then, in relation to education and income:

- Very liberal: People outside the West with lower incomes and less education.
- Pretty liberal: Westerners outside of the United States with lower income; people outside the West with lower income but more education.
- Moderate: Those in the United States with lower income.
- Pretty conservative: People outside of the United States with higher income.
- Very conservative: Those in the United States with higher income.

Why is the United States exceptional in this respect? We saw hints of the answer in the GSS data earlier in the chapter. Not all Americans are especially conservative on economic issues. While there are income-based differences on these issues among Americans as with others worldwide, only certain Americans—specifically white, heterosexual Christians—are unusually conservative.

Indeed, in a major study of redistributive policies, Alberto Alesina and Edward Glaeser pointed to the fundamental fact that many countries that spend relatively little on social welfare are racially diverse (e.g., the United States and many countries in Latin America) while many that spend more on social welfare are relatively racially homogeneous (e.g., Japan and many countries in Europe).[13] They further note that, within the United States, welfare benefits are typically set at lower levels in states with higher proportions of African Americans (e.g., states in the Deep South), while many states with very low proportions of African Americans have substantially more generous welfare benefits (e.g., states in New England).

Overall our international comparisons have identified some broad similarities across the world. People high in religiosity and low in education tend to hold more conservative views on abortion and religious discrimination; people low in religiosity and high in education tend to hold more liberal views on abortion and religious discrimination.

Native-born people with less education tend to hold more conservative views on discrimination against immigrants; immigrants tend to hold more liberal views on discrimination against immigrants. People higher in socioeconomic status tend to hold more conservative views on redistribution; those lower in socioeconomic status tend to hold more liberal views on redistribution.

These similarities show that the patterns predicted by our basic argument—that individuals tend to match their policy preferences to their everyday interests—are not limited to the United States. However, idiosyncratic national features add texture to the picture.

The primary source of differences between the United States and the rest of the world—the primary source of American Exceptionalism in political views—rests in its greater diversity. The effects of this greater diversity are apparent for issues relating directly to group-based favoritism (as we saw in chapter 5), but American diversity affects other issues as well. The United States has a somewhat higher proportion of conservatives than other Western countries when it comes to abortion, but this relates to its greater religious and lifestyle diversity; on the whole, while in other Western countries Ring-Bearer churchgoers are a rather thin slice of the public, these folks maintain a larger (but by no means dominant) presence in the United States. On economic issues, group-based conflicts in the United States have a substantial effect on policy opinions. Income differences matter in relation to economic views in the Unities States to about the same degree as they do elsewhere, but there's an added layer of group-based diversity driving some groups unusually far to the right, something that tends to be true generally of nations with greater racial diversity.

From Issues to Coalitions

We've now seen three broad areas in which different interests imply different policy positions, related in each area through different demographic features. Different sexual and reproductive lifestyles create competing interests when it comes to moral and legal policies relating

to areas like premarital sex, abortion, birth control, pornography, and marijuana legalization. Different group identities and human capital levels create competing interests about whether group dominance or human capital ought to reign when it comes to rules governing school prayer, same-sex marriage, immigration, affirmative action, and related areas. Income, race, and other factors create competing interests about the need for hard-times programs and whether those should be publicly or privately provided.

We now move into part III of the book, leaving the realm of political issues and entering the realm of political coalitions. Having seen the policy-specific connections among interests, demographics, and public opinion, we now use the tools we developed to create fuller pictures of groups and the policy-driven coalitions they form.

Part IV

Political Challenges

CHAPTER 10

An Uncomfortable Take on Political Positions

From cocktail parties to cable networks to the halls of congress, people who disagree about politics nonetheless come together and agree on one point: Political differences exist because one side is fair, reasonable, and public-spirited while the other side is unfair, unreasonable, selfish, mean, and hypocritical. (They just don't agree on which side is which.)

As neighborhoods and media outlets become increasingly politically segregated, these kinds of explanations become more extreme, unfiltered by the usual demands of politeness that would otherwise temper one's impulses in mixed company. It's easy to describe one's political opponents as corrupt boobs and idiot saboteurs in a room full of allies. Even academic researchers occasionally make similar moves. In chapter 1 we discussed a study describing opposition to minority-advancing programs as "symbolic racism," which isn't exactly value-neutral, but also not likely to ruffle many feathers in a room full of social scientists.

In people's polite moments, they concede that both sides are fair, reasonable, and public-spirited—*Senator Soandso is a good family man who loves his country, but he and I simply have a fundamental disagreement about how to achieve prosperity and fairness for all Americans*. Some academic treatments take this tack. Moral psychologist Jon Haidt describes how liberals and conservatives are relying on different moral foundations—they're all good people, after all.[1] Libertarian economist Bryan Caplan describes how everyone is trying to do what's best for society, after all (it's just that, for Caplan, libertarian economists happen to know better what's best).[2]

Our take is neither partisan nor polite, and might make many uncomfortable. Our explanation for political disagreements begins with something obvious but often overlooked: The policies people fight over have real-life consequences that help some people and harm others. In our view, all sides typically seek to advance their interests and are hypocritical in the way they present their views. No side is particularly motivated by being fair or reasonable or public-spirited. Indeed, when it comes to policy disputes, we think that one's perceptions of what's "fair" or "reasonable" are themselves typically driven by one's interests. People are generally neither boobs nor saboteurs, but social animals competing over advantages for themselves, their families, and their social networks.

It doesn't take one very far to divide the country (much less the whole of humanity) into two or three ideological boxes. If one wants to understand the variety of public opinion, one needs to think about specifics. The key, we have argued, is to look at people's lives and interests, focusing on demographic features that provide clues to the particular outcomes that will help or harm them.

On sexual and reproductive issues, differences in Freewheeler and Ring-Bearer lifestyles help determine whether people gain or lose when higher costs are placed on Freewheeler lifestyles—when casual sex carries moral costs, when partying carries legal costs, and when family planning is restricted. These lifestyles influence people's decisions to affiliate with or avoid religious groups. People's religious and lifestyle patterns strongly predict their views on issues related to premarital sex, pornography, abortion, birth control, and marijuana legalization.

About group-based issues, we proposed that the two key factors in determining people's competing interests are, first, group identities (race, religion, etc.) and, second, accumulated human capital (education and related cognitive abilities). Analogous to talented African American baseball players in our allegory, people with lots of human capital who are also members of traditionally subordinate groups do better when the rules abolish group-based barriers and give advantages to those with lots of human capital. Analogous to less talented white baseball players in our allegory, people with less human capital do better when advantages are given to their own groups and other groups are held back. People's views on issues involving sexual orientation, religion, immigra-

tion, and race are well predicted by their group identities and levels of human capital.

Finally, on economic issues, people differ not only in how much they stand to benefit (or lose) when wealth is redistributed, but also in, first, how much they might need hard-times programs in the future and, second, how much they might rely on their own social groups and private charities when hard times hit. So, while income predicts people's economic views to a degree, race, age, gender, religion, sexual orientation, and human capital are also important for understanding and predicting preferences for public hard-times programs.

Because people generally adopt issue opinions that advance their multifaceted inclusive interests, they wind up frequently adopting, buffet-like, sets of particular views that fall outside of a simple left-right framework. When someone's interests point to "liberal" policy preferences on one set of issues and to "conservative" policy preferences on a different set of issues, that's usually how things turn out. Focusing on interests points the way to finding people who are typically liberal, typically conservative, typically libertarian, and typically whatever-we-should-call-the-opposite-of-libertarian, along with other nameless position profiles that are completely absent from the usual discussions of the political map.

We view it as a good sign that our efforts line up with certain aspects of political targeting by campaign professionals, the people who get paid to get such things right. We have tried to add to these perspectives by providing a psychological framework that can reveal interests in play in a wide range of issues (beyond the usual suspects involving economic redistribution). In particular, instead of viewing "social" or "cultural" or "religious" issues as symbolic and disconnected from the concrete concerns of real life, we've made the case that battles over sexual lifestyles and social status regimes have real-life effects as concrete as the results of fights over money. Without necessarily knowing the real reasons, across a range of policy areas, people are motivated to seek outcomes that advance the everyday goals of themselves, their families, their friends, and their wider circles of social allies.

On that point, we've also argued that human minds are designed for spin, to hide their strategic foundations behind socially attractive veneers. The Public Relations Departments of people's minds craft stories about the benevolent wisdom of their own views and the malevolent

idiocy of their opponents' views, with Spokespersons almost wholly ignorant of the nature of the game. Public political discourse is frequently a battle between prickly Spokespersons fighting over made-up stories that have little to do with the underlying motives of people's mental Boards of Directors. Admitting that one's political opponents would often be worse off under one's own policy preferences interferes with the goal of advancing one's own agenda. People's desires to advance favorable policy outcomes typically trump any desire to express coherent views of themselves and others.

Observers can predict, with error, to be sure, other people's political positions and priorities by taking into account the other person's inclusive interests, considering their religion, lifestyle, sexual orientation, race, immigration status, education, intelligence, income, and so forth, *despite the fact that most people are themselves unaware that these interest-relevant features are important in shaping their own views*. In fact, most people, most of the time, will strongly deny, for example, that their opposition to abortion has anything to do with suppressing others' sexual promiscuity. Virtually no one says they favor meritocracy because it helps smart people like themselves beat less-smart people in social competitions. People's Public Relations Departments don't let their Spokespersons know such things, let alone say them out loud; they are the kinds of accounts, indeed, that people find insulting, regardless of how well the accounts explain the facts.

We think we've provided the basics to understand these kinds of political opinions, but we acknowledge the limits of the approach. We don't want to give the impression that we think our view explains the totality of the expanse of American political opinion. People are, in a word, complicated. We think we've given a foundation that is really useful, but it's obvious there's more to the story.

Issues We Haven't Addressed

Our approach has focused on people's everyday goals in social life, involving areas including safety and basic necessities, friendships and social status, romantic and sexual relationships, and parenting and other family relationships. In line with this focus, the political issues we have

covered have largely been those with strong connections to competitive aspects of ordinary social life—fights over sexual and reproductive lifestyles, fights over the rules determining social status, and fights over the redistribution of resources.

At the same time, we've largely ignored certain other issues that feature prominently in modern political battles. In some cases, our favored explanation offers little traction, leaving us with issues on which it's not clear (to us anyway) what, if any, the connections are to everyday social conflicts.

Two sets of issues in this category that loom large are fights over environmental policy and military matters. That's not to say that there aren't some real-life connections between some people's interests and the results of these conflicts. Those who work for oil companies or defense contractors, for example, have reasonably clear incentives to oppose policies that would diminish the profitability of their businesses. It's not mysterious why oil executives might view global warming with skepticism or why defense executives might think that strong military responses are crucial in meeting challenges overseas. Real-life interests could also help explain why people living close to a polluting factory favor regulating the factory. And it's not surprising to find that middle-class Americans with lots of friends and relatives who serve or have served in the military support the idea of a large, well-paid military.

These constituencies are too small, however, to explain the outsized role environmental and military issues play in political debates. Why, in short, do so many people only distally affected care so much about these issues? And why have they split out the way they have in terms of competing views? Fights over global warming, renewable energy, interventions in Middle Eastern conflicts, and related areas affect people's everyday lives, but the connections, it seems to us, are usually remote, and, further, it would have been hard to predict ex ante which people would have wound up on which side.

When it comes to spending on the environment, the correlations between people's positions and their demographic traits are modest in size, and don't lend themselves to easy interpretation. People who favor higher environmental spending tend to have more education, not to be regular churchgoers, to be younger and—perhaps most surprisingly—to have no children.[3] Less favorable attitudes toward environmental spending tend

to come from white, Protestant churchgoers with less education, seniors, and—again surprisingly—those with children. The sorts of explanations we've emphasized wouldn't do much to illuminate these patterns.

On military spending, the demographic predictors make only marginally more sense. People in favor of greater amounts of military spending tend to be native-born Christians and Jews, particularly among whites and Asians with moderate and lower levels of human capital. Wanting to reduce military spending is especially common among the nonreligious, Muslims, and others who are neither Christian nor Jewish, among people from immigrant families, among people with top 20% human capital, and among African Americans and Latino Americans. The patterns recall the group-based issues we covered in chapter 5, pointing to the combination of human capital with religious, immigrant, and racial group identities. There are aspects that are sensible from an interest-based perspective. We can understand, for example, why many Muslim immigrants might particularly oppose widespread U.S. involvement in the Middle East—people's interests extend beyond themselves to family and friends, including those in foreign countries. But it's less clear how limited interests like these generalize into a very wide and very passionate ongoing debate over the U.S. military.

Along similar lines, while we can understand why news stories involving floods and storms, environmental catastrophes, or terrorist bombings are particularly attention grabbing for human minds—important parts of people's fundamental goals, after all, relate to health and safety—we don't see how this leads to widespread, passionate conflict within society. Generally it seems that people, more or less (putting aside people such as energy company executives and defense contractors), benefit to similar degrees, and endure similar costs, as policy shifts toward more defense spending (safer nation, perhaps, at the expense of national treasure) or more environmentally friendly regulation (cleaner nation at the expense, perhaps, of economic growth). In short, compared to the issues we've (not coincidentally) chosen to cover in this book, our approach, focusing on everyday interests, doesn't seem to do as good a job with these two sets of issues either in terms of their prominence or in terms of predicting what side people will be on.

We don't deny—at all—that other perspectives can be very helpful in unraveling these and other issues. For example, political science per-

spectives emphasizing interest groups and elite leadership could help in explaining military and environmental views. Perhaps the enormous dollars at stake for key defense and energy industries lead to powerful lobbies to encourage lawmakers to adopt pro-defense and anti-regulatory positions that few Americans would spontaneously find intuitively appealing. Perhaps, then, these lawmakers use their influence to broaden the view that supporting such positions is an important part of being a good member of their party coalition. And perhaps many ordinary citizens come along for the ride based on factors that don't clearly relate to their everyday interests. We find something like this plausible, but it's beyond the scope of our emphasis in this book, which has been on ordinary citizens' everyday interests.

Another issue we find puzzling is physician-assisted suicide or the right to die. Views on assisted suicide correlate with religiosity and with sexual and reproductive issues, but the right to die is not a sexual or reproductive issue. Our discussions in chapter 4 about Freewheelers and Ring-Bearers do little to explain suicide opinions. On this topic, we simply admit that our approach doesn't seem to provide any explanation. Note that biblical literalism doesn't do much work on this issue either. Just as the Bible doesn't actually say anything directly about abortion, it also doesn't explicitly condemn suicide, much less physician-assisted suicide.

We're confident that there are still other important issues on which our approach isn't particularly helpful. That's OK with us. We don't believe that our perspective must explain *everything* to explain *anything*. Our perspective, centered on everyday interests, should be expected to work best in the context of issues that widely affect everyday interests. For other kinds of issues, we are pleased to concede, there is a heightened need for other kinds of approaches.

Dynamics beyond Demographics

Predicting people's political positions is hard. Predicting how their positions will change over time is harder. In some ways our view provides general guidelines for thinking about policy opinion dynamics, but, again, it can't provide all the answers.

Take, for example, some of the big trends the United States has seen over the last sixty years. First, while no one is suggesting that the American educational system is without flaws, adults today are far better educated, on average, than their parents and grandparents. Second, the United States is experiencing a dramatic rise in racial and ethnic diversity. Third, Freewheeler lifestyles have been on the rise as Ring-Bearer lifestyles have declined, something that has been a big force in driving the slow decline in American church attendance and the rise in religiously unaffiliated people.[4]

These trends have had something to do with changes in attitudes on discriminatory issues (driven by higher numbers of racial and religious minorities along with higher educational attainment) and lifestyle issues such as premarital sex and marijuana legalization (driven by growth in Freewheeler lifestyles and declines in religiosity). But then there is the noticeably mysterious exception of abortion views, which haven't changed much over the past decades despite the big rise in less religious, Freewheeling folks with lots of education. In contrast, while issues like same-sex marriage and marijuana legalization have been changing in line with demographic changes, they've actually been moving more quickly in a liberal direction than simple demographics would predict.

In addition to long-term, demographic-driven directional shifts, there are also plenty of shifts in public mood from year to year, first in one direction, then in another.[5] Some of these changes probably have to do with the party in power, as the public tends to shift in a more conservative direction in response to Democratic administrations and in a more liberal direction in response to Republican administrations.

Social scientists have also focused on the short-term dynamics of individuals' political positions—how these positions can shift from moment to moment based on a variety of factors. Consider a survey in which the Danish government asked a large number of her citizens their political views on a number of issues, notably including the question of the government's role in transferring wealth from rich to poor. A team of political scientists, led by Michael Bang Petersen, took advantage of this survey to investigate an unusual question: Do hungry people favor such transfers more than less hungry people?

The researchers theorized that people's attitudes might depend in a systematic way on their current, transient state. Hungry people, the ar-

gument goes, are better off in a world in which people share. Less hungry people, in contrast, get no benefits from a strong sharing norm; they're doing just fine. Some people might be generally hungrier than others, having limited access to sufficient food from day to day. But everyone, even when generally well fed, is also hungrier and less hungry throughout any given day. Noting this, the researchers compared people who took the survey before lunchtime with people who took it after lunchtime. The results were that, indeed, hungrier people favored transfers more than their less hungry counterparts.[6] These results fit well with the broader literature in social science showing that people's attitudes and preferences can be surprisingly sensitive to context and present state.

In certain respects, our approach sits comfortably with such findings. Being hungry changes—according to this perspective, if only temporarily—one's interests, and policy views are tracking these temporary shifts. Still, if people's views are very sensitive to context or state in this way, then there is less conceptual work to be done by our favored demographic variables that point to more stable strategic interests, a point which we take seriously. Still, a lot more research is needed in order to understand how dynamics in the short term of the course of the day and long term of the course of history affect policy views. In the end, our expectation is that the sorts of variables we've pointed to will continue to predict people's views, on average, despite transient influences of context and state.

Nerd Fight: Contrasts and Connections with Political Science

Our impression of political scientists is that they appear in many different types when it comes to explaining issue opinions, broadly running from those who focus on policy content and demographics to those who focus on abstractions such as ideologies and values. We're obviously much more sympathetic to the former than the latter.

The key debate in these discussions, from our perspective, of course, is how much interests matter in driving political opinions. In chapter 2 we responded to claims that self-interest hardly matters: When we run simple tests of these simple claims, quite often the simple claims are

simply untrue. We've focused on expanding the notion of interests and showing how interests express themselves in a wide range of issues, including ones where few researchers have thought to consider interest-based accounts at all.

Another related axis of debate is the extent to which it's useful to view people as primarily "top-down" or "bottom-up" thinkers when it comes to politics. Do people mostly take positions on particular issues by consulting their "higher-level" ideologies, values, and principles? Or do they care mostly about the real-life effects of policies, using those to determine what kinds of ideologies, values, and principles they express in a bottom-up fashion?

While many political scientists endorse the top-down view,[7] we believe people are mostly bottom-up thinkers—we think their mental Boards of Directors care primarily about the effects of policies on themselves, their families, and their wider social networks. This perspective doesn't exclude all top-down processes, however. A person might, for example, have strongly "liberal" views on abortion and related issues for interest-based reasons, and also have strongly "liberal" views on redistributive issues for interest-based reasons. This person might travel in social circles in which people often talk about their own views as "liberal" or "conservative," and would naturally call themselves "liberal" based on the average of their views. And, having identified themselves as a "liberal," the person might adopt more left-leaning positions on other kinds of issues on which their interests don't strongly point one way or another. Is this a top-down or a bottom-up situation? Both, but the dynamic starts with sets of issues on which the person has strong real-world interests and proceeds largely from the bottom up.

Unraveling causality is, of course, tremendously difficult.[8] Studies of political party identifications illustrate the problem. Many political scientists (but not all, of course)[9] view party identifications—thinking of oneself as either a Democrat or a Republican—as a big cause (rather than an effect) of one's positions on particular policy issues. Frequently, the key evidence in favor of such a view is that individuals' party identifications are pretty stable over time, particularly across adulthood.[10]

The problem with this line of reasoning is that a bottom-up, interest-driven view predicts party stability as well. Imagine a person who mostly

has opinions that fit with the Democratic party and another person who mostly has opinions that fit with the Republican party. Now imagine that both people change their minds about one or two of their less important issue opinions. Do we expect them to change parties in a bottom-up world? No. If party identifications are essentially *averages* of one's important policy opinions, a number of key issue switches would be required to cause a big change in the overall average represented by a person's party identification.

So, stability of party identifications isn't good evidence in favor of parties-as-causes rather than parties-as-effects because both perspectives predict essentially the same thing. Still, one area where the two approaches do make different predictions involves party-issue realignments: cases in which a party that was once in favor of one policy that is central for some voters changes, adopting the competing policy. In such cases, the top-down, parties-as-causes view seems to predict that most people will change their *policy view* rather than change their *party*. In contrast, the bottom-up, parties-as-effects view predicts that the people who really care about the underlying issue in question should be relatively likely to switch parties (taking into account that party affiliations are driven by the various issue positions that really matter to a given person, and rarely by just one alone).

The recurring line from defenders of the parties-as-causes perspective, then, is problematic. Often they say, essentially: We know that parties are likely to be causes because party affiliations are really stable . . . unless the parties switch positions on issues.[11] Well, OK, which is it? Do people take positions because of party loyalty (in which case they wouldn't tend to switch parties because the party switched issue positions)? Or do they show party loyalty because the party reflects their positions on issues (in which case one *would* see certain population segments switch parties because of an issue realignment)?

One of the clearest modern examples of issue realignment, for example, was spurred by the civil rights acts of the 1960s. From 1876 to 1960, Republican presidential candidates *never* carried the Deep South. In July of 1964, Democrat Lyndon Johnson signed the first major civil rights act. It was opposed by the Republican nominee, Barry Goldwater. A mere four months later, in November, a Republican presidential

candidate won the Deep South for the first time in a century, beating a former Texas governor who otherwise won forty-four of the fifty states. Over the next two decades, enormous numbers of Southern whites switched from identifying with the Democratic party to identifying with the Republican party. We take this as perhaps the signature example of how issues might drive people to parties, rather than the reverse.

When it comes to party identifications and ideological labels, we think they can exert substantial causal influence on a range of judgments, particularly in circumstances that are complex or ambiguous with respect to their impact on everyday interests. Even for the kinds of widely debated issues we focus on in this book, party identifications and ideological labels can still operate at the margins. Lots of people care deeply about some set of issues but don't care much about others. There is plenty of room for ideological positions and party preferences to have relatively big effects on issues on which a person otherwise doesn't have strong opinions.

Still, some individuals care deeply about some issues in a way that is basically unconstrained by ideologies and parties, something the 1964 election showed clearly. Does anyone seriously think, for another example, that there wouldn't be a big party shift among Ring-Bearers and Freewheelers if the modern parties switched positions on abortion and related lifestyle issues? Does anyone seriously think that *most* college-educated Freewheelers get their pro-choice positions from the fact that they (for unrelated reasons) started liking Democrats when they were in their twenties? Does anyone seriously think that if the modern parties switched their positions on safety nets that there wouldn't be a big party shift among Johnsons and African Americans? Does anyone seriously think that rich, white men tend to oppose redistribution *mostly because* they like Republicans (for reasons having little to do with their interests)? Does anyone seriously think that poorer African Americans tend to favor public hard-times programs *mostly because* they like Democrats? Or because they were raised to be "liberals"?

We're not taking an extreme position. We're not saying that people never shift their issue opinions based on allegiances to party-based coalitions. In fact, we think they often do shift to some degree, particularly among college-educated whites (who, as we noted in chapter 1,

show greater issue coherence across opinion domains), and particularly when it comes to low cost behaviors like answering survey questions. But party affiliation is an implausible theory of the fundamentals—it's an implausible thing to posit as a singularly important Prime Mover.

The causality is even harder to sort through when it comes to "values" and political "personalities" as they relate to policy opinions.[12] This is particularly true given the DERP Syndrome tendencies we discussed in chapter 1. We don't know that it's possible to come up with sufficient strategies to figure out which way the causal arrows point when researchers use a set of survey items on discriminatory policy views to "explain" another set of survey items on discriminatory policy views, or when they use a set of generally worded views about income equality to "explain" another set of views about policies that advance income equality. At any rate, noting a big correlation between two sets of survey items with substantively equivalent content should never be the end point of a scientific inquiry. It's like tethering one hot-air balloon to another and hoping neither floats away.

Indeed, part of the attraction of approaches focused on demographics and interests is that they provide a way out of what are otherwise largely circular discussions. Reducing circularity has a lot to do with what attracts us to evolutionary psychology, economics, and related perspectives. Much of psychology, perhaps understandably, focuses on purely psychological motives. People conform out of a need for conformity. People seek approval out of a need for self-esteem. In contrast, evolutionary and economic approaches are more likely to focus on people's desires to achieve tangible outcomes in their lives. Evolutionary approaches, in particular, seek to tie these desires back to something authentically fundamental—the mechanical tendency within populations of replicators to replace over time less-replicating variants with more-replicating variants. This line of argument constitutes perhaps the only genuine proposal to tie off the "why" questions when it comes to goals and behaviors. At some point in the analysis, the train of "whys" ends with the ultimate (secular) Prime Mover.

Ask many political scientists who take an abstract approach what begins people's train of causality—what causes them to have different ideologies, different party identifications, different values, different political

personalities—and the answer is quite often: Because people were raised that way. (Or, to use the fancy term, because of *socialization*.) We find that answer both intellectually unsatisfying and scientifically implausible.[13] Socialization—not to mention its even vaguer cousin, "learning"—is a kind of hypnotic curiosity anesthetic, an answer used to silence question-asking across the social sciences with a simple wave of the hand.

As to its scientific implausibility, the raised-that-way theory is very often undermined when actually tested. Important tests of such matters come from behavioral genetics, typically from studies involving twins. Twins come in two forms, identical and fraternal. In the case of the former, a sperm joins its genetic material with an egg to form a single zygote, and that zygote then splits into two genetically identical copies. Both of the identical zygotes then develop into genetically identical people. In the case of fraternal twins, two different eggs (with different versions of the mother's genes) combine with two different sperm (with different versions of the father's genes) to create two zygotes with the average degree of genetic overlap found in full siblings.

When raised together, twins have more or less all of their raised-that-way features in common—they typically have the same household, the same rearing parents and other family members, the same neighborhood, similar classrooms, similar friends, similar exposure to media, and so forth. When researchers compare identical twins with fraternal twins, then, to the extent that identical twins are more similar than fraternal twins, researchers can make inferences about how much of the variation in their attitudes and behaviors is driven by shared genes rather than shared environments.

A key insight is that children can resemble parents, but there are at least two reasons this might be so. Children might resemble (biological) parents in large part because they have genes in common—tall parents typically produce tall children. And children might resemble (rearing) parents in large part because of raised-that-way factors—English-speaking parents produce English-speaking children.

So what happens when researchers resist the hypnotic pull of raised-that-way stories and put the theory to a proper test? Summarizing a major set of twin studies, a team of political scientists noted, somewhat technically, that the studies "found that approximately half the

population variance in a summative measure of political attitudes, the Wilson-Patterson Index, could be attributable to broad-scale heritability; only 11% was attributed to the twins' shared environment, with the rest owing to unshared environment."[14] In other words, genes account for about five times more variation than shared raised-that-way factors when it comes to political attitudes. The authors concluded with the polite but devastating line: "[T]he mainstream socialization paradigm for explaining attitudes and behaviors is not necessarily incorrect but is substantively incomplete."[15] Well, yeah.

Of course we're not saying—nor does anyone seriously believe—that there's a "pro-life gene" or a "health care subsidy gene" or a "school prayer gene." So what does it mean to say that lots of the variation in political views is a function of people's genetic variation? Political scientists have pointed out that perhaps people's genetic differences have to do with things like hormonal differences or perceptual differences, and that, perhaps, some combination of genetic factors influence the kinds of top-down "values" these researchers suppose are the foundations of political views.[16]

From our perspective, we would point out that we've found strong relationships between politics and various demographic items that are clearly related to genes—gender and sexual orientation, for example. In addition, it has long been known (though it is of course controversial) that differences in intellectual talents are in part due to differences in genetic inheritance.[17] Even the kinds of Freewheeler versus Ring-Bearer lifestyles we examined in chapter 4 show clear genetic influence. For example, research has suggested that the reason children of divorced parents are themselves more likely to divorce has a lot to do with genes.[18] In a related vein, people's differing levels of interest in casual sex have more to do with genetic than with raised-that-way factors.[19]

To the extent that many of the demographic features underlying strategic conflicts over policies are themselves substantially genetically influenced, this might help explain the high degree of heritability of many political opinions. This doesn't mean, of course, that a given genotype will reliably, in every place and time, produce an individual who opposes immigration, or supports abortion rights, or finds income redistribution appealing. Instead, it means that many of a person's features

that might influence which policies are in their interests in a given place and time are themselves partly genetically influenced. And so, put two people with similar genetic codes into a similar environment, they'll both go through an ongoing process of figuring out the policies that advance their interests, and, to the extent that they started off this figuring-out process with similar interest-relevant features, the resulting political opinions will be similar as well.

Again, we don't view our approach in this book as exhausting the range of interesting factors that influence diverse political opinions. We think of it more as an attempt to adjust the direction of a large ship, even though we may not know the ship's ultimate destination. To the extent that researchers spend much of their efforts thinking that interests don't matter, that most things are driven by socialization, that the most interesting "determinants" of policy views are ideologies, parties, values, and so on, we're saying that they ought to be exploring different waters.

Can we all get along? (Well, you know, probably not.)

We've argued that people—Democrats and Republicans, political elite and the folk—are, in the final analysis, basically self-serving politicians in the worst sense of the word. They fight to advance their interests at others' expense and engage in blatant spin to hide their real motives, usually without even being aware that this is what they're doing. Our view is, almost by definition, a deeply cynical one.

Works that emphasize how both sides of the aisle are equally guilty of sin commonly conclude with a call for greater tolerance and understanding. *By shining additional light on the sources of our political divisions, we hope not to have fanned the flame of discord but rather to have lit the way forward on a path we can all walk together . . . blah blah blah*. This general approach was taken (in a much more sophisticated manner, of course) by a number of excellent recent books, including *The Righteous Mind* by psychologist Jonathan Haidt, *The Three Languages of Politics* by economist Arnold Kling, and *Predisposed* by political scientists John Hibbing, Kevin Smith, and John Alford. All these authors express hope

that their efforts to enhance mutual understanding might have positive effects, though with enough skepticism to avoid bland naiveté.

We find ourselves unable to follow suit. To borrow a country phrase, we have to dance with the one that brought us. While working together can produce lots of non-zero-sumness—ways we can all be better off—in the end, policies will be set one way or another, and the costs and benefits will be unequally felt. Either abortions will be widely available (in which case Ring-Bearers will have to cope with more Freewheeling neighbors) or they won't be (in which case Freewheelers trying to delay having children will have a tougher time of it). Universities will preferentially admit racial minorities (in which case some whites on the cusp will be denied admission) or they won't (in which case some minorities will be worse off than they otherwise would be). The transfers from some (richer, healthier, younger) to others (poorer, sicker, middle-aged) at the heart of Obamacare will be enhanced, left in place, diminished, or repealed, with each option affecting different people's wallets and well-being differently.

From this perspective, the sharp tone of people's disagreements is in large part a reflection of their different—very real—interests in policy outcomes.

Most people hope for lower volume but higher tones in political arguments; we're not holding our breath. Indeed, we suspect that people often make the case for political tolerance in situations in which their Boards have determined that their favored policies would benefit from tolerance: when, for instance, their favored policy is the status quo and they don't want it disturbed, or when their favored policy is some middle-of-the-road position that requires compromise from the extremes. In other cases, when it serves their policy objectives, people find angry protests, over-the-top accusations, and disruptive parliamentary tactics positively heroic.

A recent case in point: In June of 2013, Republicans in the Texas legislature sought to pass a bill imposing tight restrictions on abortion providers in the state. The Democratic response was a filibuster in the state senate led by Wendy Davis, and a series of disruptive protests. On the right, blogger Erick Erickson from redstate.com cried foul: "What

we are seeing is, like in Wisconsin, if the left does not get its way it will hijack the process. The left will disrupt democracy to avoid defeat or ensure a win. The filibuster was not successful so the left caused a mob scene to run the clock out. . . . Last night in Austin, [left-wing activists] showed they'd be fine to [metaphorically burn to the ground] the democratic process."[20]

Erickson called on Texas governor Rick Perry to call a new session of the legislature to pass the anti-abortion law, which he did and it did. It was obvious all along that this would be the ultimate outcome. Does this mean that Wendy Davis had done something futile, something that merely wasted valuable time and resources?

To supporters of abortion rights, not at all. As *New York Times* columnist Gail Collins put it:

> [T]he now-famous 11-hour filibuster by State Senator Wendy Davis defeated a major anti-abortion bill. . . . The next day, however, Gov. Rick Perry announced that he was calling a new special session to take up the bill again. . . . Perhaps she can pull out her pink sneakers and filibuster for two or three weeks. . . . I wouldn't count on it. But that doesn't mean we didn't see something important happen in Austin. . . . [Attempts to limit abortion have] been going on all over the country, and if the high drama in the State Senate in Texas does nothing beyond making the story clear, it'll have done a lot.[21]

So far, we see two "principles" at work. From the right: It's bad to "hijack the process" and "disrupt democracy" to get one's way. From the left: It's good to disrupt the process if it calls attention to one's side.

A mere few months later, there was another dramatic political event, this time in the U.S. Congress. The central provisions of Obamacare were soon to go into effect, and at the same time, the federal budget was to run out. Democrats held the White House and the U.S. Senate, and it was obvious that Republicans did not have anything approaching enough votes to repeal or defund Obamacare.

But now Erickson—he who expressed principled outrage at the idea that anyone might "disrupt democracy to avoid defeat or ensure a win"—was singing an entirely different tune, urging Republican members of Congress to, well, hijack the process: "Our endgame is to leave the whole

thing shut down until the President defunds Obamacare. And if he does not defund Obamacare, we leave the whole thing shut down. . . . Hold the line. Undermine Obamacare. Shut it down."[22]

And, of course, Collins now saw things differently as well: "[T]he big obstacle to any progress whatsoever is the small but mighty cadre of Tea Party Republicans in the House. The ones who are trying to tie funding the government to the death of Obamacare. They are egged on by people like Senator Ted Cruz of Texas, who kept his colleagues immobilized this week while he talked for 21 straight hours. . . . Cruz is basically a roadblock with a Princeton debate medal."[23]

It's clear what's going on in cases like these. The real "principle" at stake is that people's priorities usually involve policy substance rather than process or tone. When people are on the policy side that is winning, they want others to play nice and by the rules. They want the losing side to accept defeat gracefully and not cause trouble. But when people are on the policy side that is losing, then all's fair, disruptions and protests are laudable, and the most hard-headed characters refusing to give in despite the obviousness of their pending defeat are the heroes of the story.

Unsurprisingly, in fact, research has shown that different individuals' opposition to and support of lawmakers' filibusters is mostly the result of whether the individuals favor the policy being filibustered and the party doing the filibustering.[24]

In sum, our view suggests that people are mostly strategic beings who look out for their inclusive interests, but also that it will always be a terrible strategic move to admit that in public. The result is likely to be that, while our approach is useful and interesting in trying to understand one's own and other people's political positions, the approach is unlikely to change anything about how people argue publicly about their preferred policies.

In fact, our perspective sheds light on why political arguments typically fail to change people's positions. If we're right, then people with substantial interests at stake shouldn't be easily convinced about, say, basic levels of income redistribution, by logic or evidence. People's positions are often based on their interests, and you can't convince someone (easily) that they should give up their goal of having more rather than

less money. Much of the public noise is people shouting post hoc rationalizations at each other, which we would expect to be singularly unimpressive in moving a motivated opponent.

If we're right, why do people even bother arguing? Mostly, we think, it's because there are always victories to be won at the margins. For all the issues we've looked at, there are opposing sides anchored by competing interests at both ends, but also people in the middle who don't have strong interests one way or the other. On sexual and reproductive policies, there are secular Freewheelers and churchgoing Ring-Bearers, but also people in the middle who aren't strongly affected by the competing policy alternatives. On group-based issues, there are people who do well both under meritocratic regimes and under rules allowing for group-based dominance, along with different people who don't do particularly well in either scenario—neither of these groups has strong interest-based reasons to defend one side or the other in these fights. On economic issues, there are people with sets of features that tend not to produce strong opinions—for instance, wealthy minorities, or upper-middle-class white Heathens, or middle-class white Christians.

Attempting to cast one's own strongly held positions in the best possible light helps to recruit to one's side those people without otherwise strong opinions. When political parties pretty evenly divide the population of strong partisans, for example, success in public perception at the margins can be the difference between gaining a bare majority and losing by a nose.

While campaigns may often focus on swing voters with conflicted or middle-of-the-road policy opinions, our efforts have been aimed at explaining the public's passionately held views, the kinds of views that are unlikely to change after watching a thirty-second commercial or scanning a glossy mailing. The tools we have provided are most useful when it comes to figuring out why different groups tend to produce individuals who are primarily driven by a particular set of positions—why Ring-Bearer churchgoers are especially focused on increasing the costs of promiscuity; why professionals and professors who are racial or religious minorities are especially focused on eliminating group-based barriers; why wealthy, white, heterosexual, Christian men are especially focused on reducing government redistribution of wealth; and so on.

Our analysis might not paint the rosiest picture of human nature, or offer the most optimistic view of what is likely to come. It might not provide comforting assurances to partisans that their own side had it right all along, or teach them satisfying new ways to feel superior to their opponents.

But our goal hasn't been to tell people what they want to hear about themselves. Instead, our goal has been to try to account for people's political views in a way that is consistent with psychological science and public opinion data. It would be impossible to achieve both goals simultaneously.

Because people can't be counted on to admit—or even know—the real reasons that underlie their particular positions, we have tried to pull back the veneer of convenient spin. What we find lying beneath—self-interest disguised through self-deception—isn't very pretty.

Which is, of course, why these agendas tend to remain hidden.

Notes

Chapter 1: Agendas in Action

1. Clarence Page (Nov. 18, 2012), Romney's "gifts" gaffe, *Chicago Tribune*.
2. Ira Stoll (Nov. 19, 2012), Defending Romney's "gift" remarks, reason.com.
3. Michael Kinsley (Apr. 23, 1988), Commentary: The gaffer speaks, *The Times*.
4. Chuck Todd (Nov. 7, 2012), live appearance on MSNBC.
5. Abramowitz 2013.
6. Abramowitz (2013) makes the point that the marriage gap and the gender gap flow in part from the fact that single people and younger people are more liberal on religious/lifestyle issues. We would add as well that single people and younger people also tend to have lower incomes and less economic stability.
7. Judis and Teixeira 2002.
8. Our data here come from the U.S. General Social Survey for 2002 to 2012.
9. Stewart et al. 2004, 108.
10. Caplan 2007, 153.
11. Steven Pinker (Oct. 24, 2012), Why are states so red and blue? nytimes.com.
12. E.g., Bardes & Oldendick 2003; Feldman 2003; Jessee 2012; Zaller 1992.
13. As an empirical matter—i.e., looking at how issue opinions correlate with calling one's views "liberal" versus "conservative" in representative samples—Americans these days use the terms such that, for the main items we explore in this book: (1) views opposing legal limits on or the moral condemnation of premarital sex, pornography, birth control, abortion, and recreational drugs are generally "liberal" and views that do want to limit or moralize these areas are generally "conservative"; (2) views that support traditionally subordinate groups (e.g., non-Christians, homosexuals, immigrants, racial minorities, and women), whether that support comes through measures to equalize group treatment or engage in affirmative efforts to advance such groups, are generally "liberal" and views that oppose such support are generally "conservative"; and (3) views that call for relatively higher levels of income redistribution and spending on safety-net and entitlement programs are generally "liberal" and views that oppose such higher levels are generally "conservative." We understand that internationally, historically, and in some corners of the academy these terms often appear with very different meanings.
14. Political scientists talk about this kind of split in various ways, pointing out, for example, that ideological coherence is higher among people with greater political knowledge (Jessee 2012) or among whites (Bowler & Segura 2012) or among political elites (Ellis & Stimson 2012).
15. Henry & Sears 2002.
16. E.g., Altemeyer 2003.
17. E.g., Flanigan & Zingale 2002; Jacoby 2010; Jessee 2012; Lewis-Beck et al. 2008.
18. E.g., Cottam et al. 2004; Ellis & Stimson 2012; Feldman 2003; Hibbing et al. 2013; Lewis-Beck et al. 2008; Zaller 1992.

19. Conover & Feldman 1981.
20. Achen 2002. We are broadly in agreement with political scientists who see party affiliations as in part causes and in part effects of issue opinions (e.g., Carsey & Layman 2006; Sniderman & Stiglitz 2012).
21. Huang & Liu 2005; Schmitt et al. 2003.
22. Bartels 2002.
23. Bullock 2011.
24. Part of our concern here involves somewhat technical matters we allude to in chapter 2 and discuss in part B of the Data Appendix for Chapter 2. In short, we think researchers in political science often don't worry as much as they should about the impact of including noncausal correlates (like, we would argue, DERP variables and, in many circumstances [especially when it comes to predicting well-known and widely contested policy opinions], party identifications and ideological labels) as predictors in their models.

Chapter 2: Investigating Interests

1. Sears & Funk 1990, 170.
2. Taber 2003, 448.
3. Lewis-Beck et al. 2008, 197.
4. Bryan Caplan (Sept. 18, 2012), Will false beliefs in the SIVH destroy Romney's candidacy? econlog.econlib.org. See also Caplan 2007.
5. Haidt 2012.
6. Ross Douthat (Jul. 1, 2013), The media, immigration and G.O.P. donorism, douthat.blogs.nytimes.com.
7. Will Wilkinson (Jun. 25, 2013), Market forces and appeals to fairness, economist .com.
8. Jonathan Chait (Aug. 23, 2013), Can't get enough of the libertarian populism debate? nymag.com.
9. Ezra Klein (Jun. 19, 2012), The individual mandate: What happened? washington post.com.
10. Kinder 1998, 801–802 (citations omitted).
11. Haidt 2012, ch. 4.
12. Owens & Pedulla 2013; see also Bowler & Segura 2012.
13. Ellis & Stimson 2012.
14. E.g., Becker 1996.
15. Kenrick & Griskevicius 2013.
16. Ibid.
17. Lau & Redlawsk 2006, 6. Lane (2003) provides a look at how self-interest has typically been restricted to material interests, relating primarily to money and other property. Kinder's (1998, p. 801) self-interest definition includes "wealth and power"—something that expands beyond the strictly tangible—but is limited to "the immediate future" and "the short-run."
18. Dawkins 1989.

19. Richerson & Boyd 1998.
20. Tajfel et al. 1971.
21. Page, Putterman, and Unel (2005) use this example.
22. Charness & Yang 2010.
23. Some political scientists have made related calls for expanding the notion of self-interest, including Lane (2003), who argued against limiting self-interest to material matters, and Ellis and Stimson (2012), who view self-interest as encompassing self, children, grandchildren, and communities.
24. Kinder 1998, 808.
25. Haidt 2012.
26. Cf. Abramson et al. 2010; Alvarez & Brehm 2002.

Chapter 3: Machiavellian Minds

1. Mercier & Sperber 2011.
2. Some of the material in this chapter echoes topics presented in Kurzban's *Why Everyone (Else) Is a Hypocrite*. Readers of that book will certainly have a head start in understanding this chapter, but will find new ways to connect ideas about divided minds to modern political debates.
3. Seeing is one of those things that can seem easy, because people do it so effortlessly, but it is in fact incredibly complex. Chapter 4 of Steven Pinker's *How the Mind Works* provides a great overview.
4. Some of the most fascinating work in modern psychology, including the growing field of cognitive neuroscience, involves sorting through the complex ways the brain divides its work (Gazzaniga, Ivry, & Mangun 2013).
5. Nisbett & Wilson 1977.
6. See Kurzban (2010) footnotes 28 and 29, p. 107, for concern about the breadth of this effect.
7. Riess et al. 1981.
8. Libet et al. 1983.
9. Gazzaniga 1998; Gazzaniga, Ivry, & Magnum 2013.
10. This is, roughly, our rephrasing of a leading definition from Keltner and Shiota (2003), discussed at length in Shiota and Kalat (2012): "An emotion is a universal, functional reaction to an external stimulus event, temporally integrating physiological, cognitive, phenomenological, and behavioral channels to facilitate a fitness-enhancing, environment-shaping response to the current situation."
11. MacKuen et al. 2007; Neuman et al. 2007; Spezio & Adolphs 2007.
12. Schreiber 2007.
13. Cohen 2003.
14. Ibid., 811. For a similar effect among Danes, see Slothuus and de Vreese (2010). They conclude: "We found that citizens tend to respond more favorably to an issue frame if sponsored by a party they vote for than if the frame was promoted by another party" (p. 642). See also Petersen et al. 2010.

15. For similar findings, see Pronin et al. (2007).
16. Haidt 2012.
17. Epley & Dunning 2000, Study 4.
18. Ibid., 867, statistical tests omitted.
19. Ibid., 867–68.
20. Heath 1999.
21. Miller & Ratner 1998, 54.
22. Taber & Lodge 2006, 764.
23. Kahan et al. 2013.
24. Weeden 2003.
25. For example, the *New York Times* obituary of Jerry Falwell said: "But, at his core, he remained through his career what he was at the beginning: a preacher and moralist, a believer in the Bible's literal truth, with convictions about religious and social issues rooted in his reading of Scripture." Peter Applebome (May 15, 2007), Jerry Falwell, Moral Majority founder, dies at 73, nytimes.com. Research has also used biblical literalism as an assumed causal predictor of abortion attitudes (e.g., Gay & Lynxwiler 1999).
26. E.g., Brewer & Stonecash 2007.

Chapter 4: Fighting over Sex

1. Unless otherwise indicated, the data for numerical claims in this chapter come from the U.S. General Social Survey.
2. E.g., Kate Taylor (Jul. 12, 2013), Sex on campus: She can play that game, too, nytimes.com.
3. These figures come from recent U.S. Census data.
4. Weeden et al. 2006.
5. Divorce rates discussed in this paragraph and the next come from our analyses of the U.S. National Survey of Family Growth.
6. Both Edsall (2006) and Douthat and Salam (2008) make the point that the working class is particularly vulnerable to the effects of family instability on financial stability, and indicate that this has contributed to a rejection of liberal social views among many working-class people. We'll see later that this isn't really so clear. Of the five lifestyle issues we cover in this chapter (premarital sex, pornography, abortion, teen birth control, and marijuana), the only major effects that exist as a function of socioeconomic differences are with regard to abortion.
7. Casper & Bianchi 2002.
8. Again, here, the divorce statistics come from our analyses of data from the U.S. National Survey of Family Growth.
9. Kurzban et al. 2010; Quintelier et al. 2013.
10. Weeden 2003.

11. Dawkins 2006; Dennett 2006.
12. Haidt 2012; Norenzayan 2013; Wilson 2002.
13. Atran 2002; Boyer 2001.
14. Sniderman & Stiglitz 2012.
15. The data on patterns of church attendance among the current generation of young adults come from the National Longitudinal Surveys of Youth 1997. Otherwise, our data on church attendance come from the GSS.
16. Weeden 2014; Weeden et al. 2008; Weeden & Kurzban 2013.
17. Our analyses of the NLSY data come from Weeden (2014), where more detail can be found.
18. Kenrick 2011.
19. Dennett 2006, 279–80.
20. Our data on these points come from the GSS, years 2002 to 2012.
21. Weeden & Kurzban 2013.

Chapter 5: Rules of the Game

1. E.g., Douthat & Salam 2008; Hayes 2012.
2. E.g., Cottam et al. 2004; Ellis & Stimson 2012; Feldman 2003; Lewis-Beck et al. 2008; Zaller 1992.
3. Pratto et al. 2006.
4. Huang & Liu 2005.
5. Dupper 2013.
6. Bowler & Segura 2012.
7. E.g., Converse 1964; Ellis & Stimson 2012; Jessee 2012.

Chapter 6: Money Matters

1. Ross Douthat (Sept. 18, 2012), Our revolting elites, nytimes.com.
2. Abramson et al. 2010; Sabato 2013.
3. Data on income in this paragraph come from 2012 U.S. Census estimates.
4. Casper & Bianchi 2002.
5. Social Security Administration (Jan. 2013), Monthly Statistical Snapshot, December 2012.
6. Office of Family Assistance, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (Aug. 2012), Characteristics and Financial Circumstances of TANF Recipients, Fiscal Year 2010.
7. C. Eugene Steuerle & Caleb Quakenbush (Nov. 2013), Social Security and Medicare Taxes and Benefits over a Lifetime, Urban Institute.

8. Philip Rucker (Jul. 28, 2009), Sen. DeMint of S.C. is voice of opposition to health-care reform, washingtonpost.com.
9. Office of Family Assistance, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (Aug. 2012), Characteristics and Financial Circumstances of TANF Recipients, Fiscal Year 2010.
10. Alesina & Glaeser 2004.
11. Political researchers sometimes comment on the fact that it is rational for minorities to support redistributive programs, though researchers are less likely to highlight the other side of that coin (e.g., Alvarez & Brehm 2002; Bowler & Segura 2012).
12. Douthat 2012; Edsall 2006.
13. Alesina & Glaeser 2004.

Chapter 7: The Many Shades of Red and Blue

1. Solnick & Hemenway 1998.
2. For example, among class members who have household incomes of $250,000 or less, 90% favor raising income tax rates on those making more than $250,000; only 63% agree among those with household incomes of $500,000 or more.
3. Converse 1964. Even those whose arguments rely on a single left-right dimension nonetheless generally acknowledge that ideological coherence is stronger among some groups than others (e.g., Jessee 2012).

Chapter 8: The Republican Coalition

1. Campbell et al. 1960.
2. Noel 2013.
3. Lewis-Beck et al. 2008.
4. Brewer & Stonecash 2007.
5. Douthat & Salam 2008.
6. Brewer & Stonecash 2007; Gelman et al. 2010; Greenberg 2004; Sabato 2013.
7. Brewer & Stonecash 2007; Ellis & Stimson 2012.
8. Douthat 2012.
9. Cohn 2013; Judis & Teixeira 2002.
10. Abramson et al. 2010.
11. Cohn 2013; Douthat & Salam 2008.
12. Martinez 2010.
13. Noel 2013.
14. Miller & Schofield 2003.
15. We don't mean to imply any judgment in using the term "downscale"—we just mean it as a simple description of those with less education and lower incomes.

Chapter 9: The Democratic Coalition

1. Abramson et al. 2010; Edsall 2006.
2. Gloria Steinem (interviewed by Susan Dominus) (1998), Gloria Steinem: First feminist, nymag.com.
3. Brewer & Stonecash 2007.
4. Cf. Douthat & Salam 2008.
5. Gilens 2012; Hacker & Pierson 2010.
6. Althaus 2003.

Chapter 10: An Uncomfortable Take on Political Positions

1. Haidt 2012.
2. Caplan 2007.
3. Our discussions of the demographic correlates of views on environmental spending (in this paragraph) and military spending (in the next paragraph) are based on our analyses of GSS data.
4. Weeden at al. 2008.
5. Erikson et al. 2002; Stimson 1991.
6. Petersen at al. 2013.
7. E.g., Cottam et al. 2004; Ellis & Stimson 2012; Feldman 2003; Lewis-Beck et al. 2008; Zaller 1992.
8. Bartels 2010.
9. E.g., Sniderman & Stiglitz 2012.
10. E.g., Jacoby 2010. Jessee (2012) makes a similar argument about liberal/conservative ideology, i.e., that its stability over time is indicative of its causal priority.
11. E.g., Abramson et al. 2010; Green et al. 2002; Lewis-Beck et al. 2008.
12. Consider this admission from Feldman (2003), a leading proponent of the view that values are important causes of political opinions: "Most work on values begins with the assumption that values influence attitudes but not the reverse. At this point, there is little hard evidence to support this assumption."
13. Pinker 2002.
14. Smith et al. 2012, 18. Several studies reach similar conclusions, including recent ones using extended family design that better enables researchers to investigate potential heightened environmental similarity between identical twins compared with fraternal twins (Hatemi et al. 2010; Kandler, Bleidorn, & Riemann 2012).
15. Smith et al. 2012, 17.
16. Hibbing et al. 2013; Smith at al. 2012.
17. Haworth et al. 2010.
18. McGue & Lykken 1992.

19. Bailey et al. 2000.
20. Erick Erickson (Jun. 26, 2013), Call them back, @GovernorPerry, redstate.com.
21. Gail Collins (Jun. 28, 2013), Expect the unexpected, nytimes.com.
22. Erick Erickson (Oct. 2, 2013), This is about shutting down Obamacare, redstate .com.
23. Gail Collins (Sept. 25, 2013), Meet dilly and dither, nytimes.com.
24. Smith & Park 2013.

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