

# The Political Brain

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the political brain is a groundbreaking investigation into the role of emotion in determining the political life of the nation for two decades drew westen professor of psychology and psychiatry at emory university has explored a theory of the mind that differs substantially from the more dispassionate notions held by most cognitive psychologists political scientists and economists and democratic campaign strategists the idea of the mind as a cool calculator that makes decisions by weighing the evidence bears no relation to how the brain actually works when political candidates assume voters dispassionately make decisions based on the issues they lose that s why only one democrat has been re elected to the presidency since franklin roosevelt and only one republican has failed in that quest in politics when reason and emotion collide emotion invariably wins elections are decided in the marketplace of emotions a marketplace filled with values images analogies moral sentiments and moving oratory in which logic plays only a supporting role westen shows through a whistle stop journey through the evolution of the passionate brain and a bravura tour through fifty years of american presidential and national

elections why campaigns succeed and fail the evidence is overwhelming that three things determine how people vote in this order their feelings toward the parties and their principles their feelings toward the candidates and if they haven't decided by then their feelings toward the candidates policy positions western turns conventional political analyses on their head suggesting that the question for democratic politics isn't so much about moving to the right or the left but about moving the electorate he shows how it can be done through examples of what candidates have said or could have said in debates speeches and ads western's discoveries could utterly transform electoral arithmetic showing how a different view of the mind and brain leads to a different way of talking with voters about issues that have tied the tongues of democrats for much of forty years such as abortion guns taxes and race you can't change the structure of the brain but you can change the way you appeal to it and here's how

explores how contemporary developments in political theory and neuropsychology can be used to explore the political implication of the relationship between conscious and nonconscious thought

since 1933 when a completely drugged and trial conditioned human wreck confessed to having started the reichstag fire in berlin dr joost a m meerloo has studied the methods by which systematic mental pressure brings people to object submission and by which totalitarians imprint their subjective truth on their victims minds dr meerloo spent the first two and one half years of wwii under the pressure of nazi occupied holland witnessing at first hand the nazi methods of mental torture on more than one occasion then after personal experiences with enforced interrogation he escaped from a nazi prison and certain death to england where he was able as chief of the psychological department of the netherlands forces to observe and study coercive methods officially after the war he came to the united states as more and more cases of thought control brainwashing and mental coercion were disclosed cardinal mindsenty colonel schwable robert vogeler and others his interest grew it was dr meerloo who coined the word menticide the killing of the spirit for this peculiar crime it is dr meerloo's position that through pressure on the weak points in men's makeup totalitarian methods can turn anyone into a traitor and in the rape of the mind he goes far beyond the direct military implications of mental torture to describing how our own culture unobtrusively shows symptoms of pressurizing people's minds he presents a systematic analysis of the methods of brainwashing and mental torture and coercion and shows how totalitarian strategy with its use of mass psychology leads to systematized rape of the mind he describes the new age of cold war with its mental terror verbocracy and semantic fog the use of fear as a tool of mass submission and the problem of treason and loyalty so loaded with dangerous confusion the rape of the mind is written for the interested layman not only for experts and scientists

the first book to tell the natural history of political orientations our political nature is the first book to reveal the hidden roots of our most deeply held moral values it shows how political orientations across space and time arise from three clusters of measurable personality

traits these clusters entail opposing attitudes toward tribalism inequality and differing perceptions of human nature together these traits are by far the most powerful cause of left right voting even leading people to regularly vote against their economic interests as this book explains our political personalities also influence our likely choice of a mate and shape society's larger reproductive patterns most importantly of all it tells the evolutionary stories of these crucial personality traits which stem from epic biological conflicts based on dozens of exciting new insights from primatology genetics neuroscience and anthropology this groundbreaking work brings core concepts to life through current news stories and personalities for instance readers will meet glenn beck and hugo chavez and come to understand the underlying evolutionary forces they represent by blending serious research with relevant contemporary examples our political nature casts important light onto the ideological clashes that so dangerously divide and imperil our world today

includes section book reviews

a groundbreaking scientific examination of the way our brains understand politics from a new york times bestselling author one of the world's best known linguists and cognitive scientists george lakoff has a knack for making science make sense for general readers in his new book lakoff spells out what cognitive science has discovered about reason and reveals that human reason is far more interesting than we thought it was reason is physical mostly unconscious metaphorical emotion laden and tied to empathy and there are biological explanations behind our moral and political thought processes his call for a new enlightenment is a bold and striking challenge to the cherished beliefs not only of philosophers but of pundits pollsters and political leaders the political mind is a passionate erudite and groundbreaking book that will appeal to anyone interested in how the mind works and how we function socially and politically

we have politics on our mind or rather we have politics in different parts of our brains in this path breaking study matt qvortrup takes the reader on a whistle stop tour through the fascinating and sometimes frightening world of neuropolitics the discipline that combines neuroscience and politics and is even being used to win elections putting the science back into political science the political brain shows how fmri scans can identify differences between liberals and conservatives can predict our behaviour with sometimes greater accuracy than surveys and can explain the biology of uprisings revolutions and wars not merely a study of empirical evidence the book shows how the philosophical theories of among others plato aristotle and spinoza can be supported by brain scans along the way it also provides an overview of the state of the art knowledge of the organ that shapes our politics the book shows that if we rely on evolutionary primitive parts of the midbrain those engaged when we succumb to polarised politics we stand in danger of squandering the gains we made through the last eight million years

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