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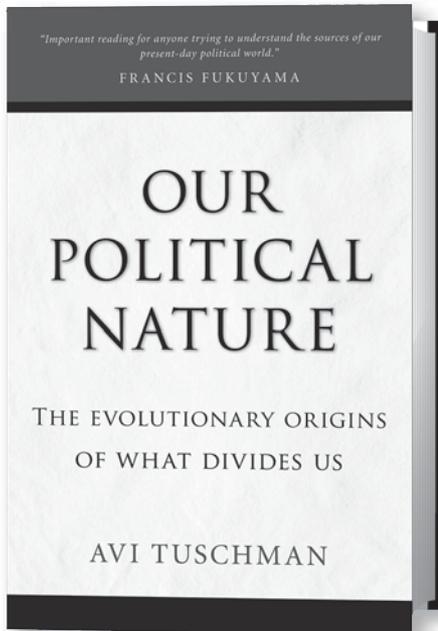


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OUR POLITICAL NATURE

The Evolutionary Origins of What Divides Us

By Avi Tuschman



Prometheus | HC | 978-1-61614-823-2 | 500pp.
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Our *Political Nature* is the first book to reveal to students the hidden roots of 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.

According to the author, 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. Profiles on Glenn Beck and Hugo Chavez will help students to further 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.

"Our Political Nature shows us that there are evolutionary underpinnings to our political attitudes, and that being liberal or conservative may reflect much deeper tendencies than we are inclined to think. This book is important reading for anyone trying to understand the sources of our present-day political world."

—Francis Fukuyama, author of *The Origins of Political Order*

"In a remarkable interdisciplinary tour de force, evolutionary anthropologist Avi Tuschman integrates findings from social psychology, genetics, and neuroscience to provide a rich understanding of the polarization in politics throughout history, and of man's inhumanity to man. In *Our Political Nature* he makes clear that be it vote choice or the decision to go to war, our politics are the product of the passions that drive us, which are deeply rooted in humanity's evolutionary origins."

—Jerrold M. Post, M.D., Director, Political Psychology Program at George Washington University, and author of *Leaders and Their Followers in a Dangerous World*

About the Author: Avi Tuschman

AVI TUSCHMAN is an expert on the hidden roots of political orientation. He began his career in politics as the youngest advisor in the government palace in Lima. While serving as the Senior Writer to President Alejandro Toledo (Peru, 2001–2006), Tuschman produced numerous articles and speeches designed to shape public opinion. In 2009, Dr. Tuschman joined hands with eighteen former presidents to co-write a regional policy agenda on democratic governance. UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon lauded the document and called it historically unprecedented. Tuschman holds a B.A. and a Ph.D. in evolutionary anthropology from Stanford.

A Message from the Author

In 2002, I found myself traveling to the far corners of Peru, visiting the country's largest mining and energy investments for a political-risk consultancy. Peru still had fresh scars from the recent Maoist guerilla war and counterinsurgency; and the conflicts festering over the earth's assets kept these ideological specters very much alive. While gathering field intelligence, I encountered an unlikely collection of movers and shakers: the CEOs of fantastically wealthy corporations, communist defense fronts, indigenous leaders, priests, and authoritarian thugs. I also saw greed, corruption, and coercion. These experiences exposed me to radically different worldviews—and to political extremism. I was riveted by how one group's notion of good represented another one's idea of evil.

Since the mining and energy sector had billions of dollars at stake in the country, we also kept close tabs on the political dramas that unfolded within the national government. I grew fascinated by the story of the president and first lady, who was also a Stanford alumna and anthropologist. Soon after meeting her, I became the youngest advisor in the Palace, where I worked on indigenous people's affairs. Eventually, I was recruited as President Toledo's senior writer. In this role, I crafted articles with the seasoned statesman to shape public opinion. As we traveled around the world after his term, I had the privilege to work with numerous other presidents, and to meet prime ministers, secretaries of state, and legislators from five continents.

I feel very lucky to have had some extraordinary experiences: I've traveled in bulletproof cars and private planes. I've eaten plates full of beetles with Indians. I've drafted policy recommendations for eighteen former heads of state. I've been kidnapped and nearly lynched by a rural militia. I've been in the "war room" as political crises exploded, and I've been behind the closed doors of meetings between mining CEOs, their lobbyists, and government officials.

At a certain point in my career, however, I felt a calling to make sense of these experiences at a deeper level—to search for the ultimate logic behind the enormous variation in people's political orientations. The traditional answers that I'd encountered during my doctoral work hadn't completely satisfied me; I wanted to transcend the wall that political psychology seemed to be running into. So I pored over hundreds of relevant journal articles spanning across the fields of primatology, neuroscience, genetics, immunology, and evolutionary anthropology. Buried in these academic journals, dozens of illuminating findings had remained disconnected from one another. I wrote this book to be the first effort to draw together this diverse research into one single, well-documented explanation of the biological foundations of our most deeply held values. My aim, in sum, is to paint a compelling and accurate portrait of our nature as political animals.

This book will provide readers with a pair of "evolutionary glasses," new lenses that will help them perceive the ultimate origins of our political orientations. This view evokes a profound sense of awe by showing how the natural history of our species is intimately connected to today's news cycle and to our private lives. They will see how key evolutionary drivers and demographic trends are right now transforming the future of our country and our world.

My intention here is not to take sides; it is to illuminate. It is my fervent hope that a deeper understanding of our true nature and of our relationships with others will quiet the heart—and that the powerful yet elegant theory of evolution will help readers make sense of an otherwise perplexing world. Armed with that deeper understanding, perhaps we can raise the level of our political discourse and strengthen our noble democratic processes. That, at the highest level, is the mission and purpose of *Our Political Nature*.

Avi Tuschman