

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

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

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

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

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