



The Dangers of Alliances Caused the Evolution of Moral Principles

Peter DeScioli

Department of Political Science, Stony Brook University, Stony Brook, New York

Pinsof, Sears, and Haselton (this issue) are right to place alliances at the foundation of political psychology. In fact, alliances are at the heart of human evolution. The best theory for why our human ancestors evolved oversized brains is that they needed more computational power to keep track of the political intrigues among alliances within their societies. This is called the social intelligence hypothesis, and also the social brain hypothesis (Dunbar & Shultz, 2007; Humphrey 1976). It is not only humans. In primates in general, species with more complex societies evolved larger brains, and the same correlation has been found in various animal groups including carnivores, ungulates, and cetaceans (Marino et al., 2007; Pérez-Barbería et al., 2007). Social life is complicated. There are families and hierarchies, friends and foes, allies and traitors. You're going to need a bigger brain. That is how alliances made us human.

To place a theory of human evolution at the foundation of political psychology would be accurate, elegant, and beautiful. It would open communication between foreign disciplines. And it is a chance to practice what we preach: We insist that evolution and not creationism should be taught in schools, so shouldn't we teach human evolution as the basis of political psychology? Yet when I search the journal *Political Psychology* for the predominant theory with the terms "social intelligence hypothesis" and "social brain hypothesis," I find nothing. When I broaden the search to any journal with "political" in the title, I get a half dozen articles and the majority, fittingly, are by Michael Bang Petersen and colleagues, pioneers at this frontier. There are of course more researchers who apply evolutionary theories, but these precious exceptions are scattershot rather than systematic and most come from outside of political psychology. Apparently, human evolution is *not* being taught in the science of politics.

Now, my colleagues are always going on about filling gaps in the literature. Why they are so devoted to such a tired metaphor I will never understand. You could sail the open seas or rocket to distant galaxies, but you would rather fill small gaps in a wall? Perhaps the gap fillers would be interested in a rather large gap, in fact a gaping chasm, between evolutionary theories of the human mind and our theories of the political mind. Or perhaps this gap is *too big* to patch and instead the wall must come down.

That is the sort of demolition that Pinsof, Sears, and Haselton have in mind: to break through the wall between

political psychology and human evolution. Their first claim is that humans evolved to form alliances. In the human mind, natural selection sculpted cognitive programs for creating alliances, just as it programmed the minds of spiders to spin webs, rats to mentally map their surroundings, and hummingbirds to joust with lancing beaks in midair. Humans are so fitted for alliances that we see them where none exist, like we hallucinate faces in the clouds and predators in the darkness. These days a human's idea of a good time is to watch alliances compete in fiction like *Game of Thrones* and *The Walking Dead*. In the realm of politics where real alliances abound, we can safely bet that humans comprehend parties, legislators, activists, and laws as players and strategies in a game of alliances.

The authors' second claim is that humans use propaganda to help allies and hurt rivals. This premise is on solid ground too. Humans are especially chatty primates with cognitive adaptations that enable us to learn, produce, and comprehend language (Pinker, 1994). By combining words according to the rules of grammar, we can communicate an unlimited range of events, both real and fictional. With language we can assess people's reputations not only by observing them directly but also by hearing what they have done from speakers, learning from hearsay and gossip (Dunbar, 1996). In turn, we can speak well of friends to benefit their reputation and speak badly of foes to hurt them.

With this combination of alliances, reputation, and gossip, we have little reason to expect humans to stick to the truth. Telling the truth may or may not be good for you and your allies. Someone who tells the truth indiscriminately would do worse than an opportunist who exaggerates favorable truths while obscuring unfavorable ones, that is, if the opportunist can avoid detection. As the authors claim, propaganda can be a profitable strategy.

Moreover, we can spin propaganda without needing to distort the facts consciously. Our unconscious mind can fabricate tales while keeping our conscious mind in the dark (Kurzban, 2011; Trivers, 2011; Weeden & Kurzban, 2014). And even unconscious trickery is not required. The mind selectively collects facts that benefit us (Mercier & Sperber, 2011). Since accurate knowledge is costly, an efficient mind focuses on collecting useful facts while passing over facts that are useless or socially undesirable. In conflicts, the mind automatically works like an intuitive prosecutor who assembles extensive records of the opponent's misdeeds and

the resulting damages, which can be used to pressure the opponent to make concessions or to persuade a jury of peers to punish them (Tetlock, 2002). Meanwhile, another cognitive program works like an intuitive defender who collects facts that help deny and excuse our misdeeds, downplay the damages they caused, and demonstrate the opponent's history of false accusations. The inevitable result is that both sides in a conflict come to believe that overwhelming evidence demonstrates their own innocence and their opponent's guilt.

But before falling into cynicism, you should know that honesty is a profitable strategy too. In most evolutionary models, there is a mixed equilibrium of honesty and lies, meaning that both strategies are profitable. In evolutionary games, signals that are consistently deceptive are not stable, because then the receivers evolve to ignore them, and then the sender stops sending the signals since they have no effect (Maynard Smith & Harper, 2003). Rampant dishonesty turns into meaningless babble and then silence. Liars cannot mimic true messages if there are no true messages to mimic.

The authors of the target article should consider this insight, because they tend toward the extreme view that political beliefs are all propaganda. As I explained, this claim is very unlikely because then the receivers would have no reason to listen. Also, the claim is not necessary for the authors' theory and actually weakens it. Propaganda is more powerful when it can hide among genuine beliefs and accurate facts. As with honesty, the same argument applies to moral principles and hypocrisy. If people's moral judgments were always unprincipled and hypocritical, then receivers would pay no attention.

However, the fact that pure dishonesty is unstable does not explain why honesty survives. By itself, the benefits of dishonesty cause a descent into meaningless babble and silence. The players cannot prevent this fate simply by being honest for the sake of preserving communication in general, because the liars will steadily outcompete them. Instead, honesty must have advantages too. The benefits of honesty have to be large enough to make it competitive against dishonesty, and a theory of propaganda needs to explain these benefits.

One obvious benefit of honesty can be found in the competition for cooperative partners (Barclay 2013; Baumard, André, & Sperber, 2013; Noë & Hammerstein, 1995). Cooperation is profitable and even more profitable when your partner is honest. Hence, humans have cognitive abilities to detect lies, to track others' reputations for lying, and to prefer partners who are more honest. In turn, people who are honest attract better partners and profit as a result.

Another benefit is that honesty helps you negotiate a deal, including economic deals that create profits to divide, political deals on packages of laws, and peace deals to stop costly cycles of retaliation. For instance, a negotiator who lies to justify demanding 90% of the profits will likely meet a counteroffer that is equally unfair, and the predictable result is no deal. The truth is the only thing that negotiators with opposite interests might agree on. So honest negotiators close more deals. In military conflicts, enemies who

have killed thousands of people on both sides have every reason to smear the opponent with the worst propaganda. But if they want to negotiate a truce, the leaders will have to come closer to the truth and acknowledge their share of the blame. Honest leaders can make peace, while liars are doomed to endless bloodshed.

Dangerous Alliances and the Evolution of Moral Strategies

From the premises of alliances and propaganda, the authors take the roots of political ideology—moral principles—and make them disappear. What looks like a difference in principles is actually a difference in political allies. For example, when your allies have *less* wealth or power, then you appeal to principles of equality. When your allies have *more* wealth or power, then you justify the inequality with principles like authority, property, and the greater good. Every human knows these basic tactics and makes ample use of them. A child fighting over a toy says, "it's my turn," appealing to equality, and in response the second child says, "I had it first," appealing to property. Then a parent may confiscate the toy, appealing to authority, which makes the children wail in protest, far from justifying the hierarchy. Likewise in politics, liberals and conservatives draw freely from the same range of moral principles. The apparent differences come from how they apply the principles selectively to benefit their own allies.

Thus, the authors made moral principles vanish before our eyes. I will now attempt to make them reappear, though different from before. They will not be the old principles deeply set and fixed by someone's personality, upbringing, or religion. But they will not be unprincipled either.

To begin with, as I mentioned before, moral principles cannot always be hollow and hypocritical, because then no one would listen to moral arguments. There must be something principled about appeals like "it's my turn" and "I had it first," something more than "I want it," a statement of desire without principle. There must be some situations where "it's my turn" is indeed judged by most observers to be a true and decisive claim, expressing more than "I want it," and where even the possessor might concede and relinquish the goods. However distorted moral appeals can become, the distortions must rely, for their power to persuade, on the genuine use of principles.

To find the source of genuine principles, let us return to the matter of alliances and add a third premise to our reasoning: Alliances cause costly conflicts.

The ability to form alliances sets off an alliance security dilemma (Snyder, 1984). The first group to form an alliance gains strength in numbers. Then the outsiders form alliances in response to protect themselves. Then alliances team up into super-alliances, and the pacts continue until everyone is bound in a tangled nest of alliances. Like an arms race, the result is that people are no more secure than before because everyone else has allies too. But now everyone is obligated to join the conflicts of many allies. When two people clash,

allies join each side and multiply the injuries to everyone. In short, alliances increase the costs of fighting.

Further, people form alliances in ways that tend to divide the group evenly in conflicts, making fights more likely to escalate to aggression and violence (DeScioli & Kimbrough, 2019; DeScioli & Kurzban, 2013). People compete for allies by trading loyalty for loyalty, where loyalty is strictly limited because supporting one person requires abandoning their opponent, particularly when you have divided loyalties to both sides. For instance, a person can give unwavering loyalty to only one ally, since equal loyalty to a second ally would require them to abandon one or both allies in a conflict between them. Thus, people's loyalties are necessarily ranked in strength, as the first rank, second rank, and so on, representing which ally the person would support against another (DeScioli et al., 2011; DeScioli & Kimbrough, 2019; DeScioli & Kurzban, 2009). When players trade loyalties and seek higher ranks, they each end up with a comparable stock of allies, so the sides are likely to be balanced in a given conflict. Critically, fights among evenly matched opponents are more likely to escalate to costly aggression because both sides assess that they have a chance of victory so neither side backs down.

To escape the dangers of alliances, humans evolved moral judgment (DeScioli, 2016, 2023; DeScioli & Kurzban 2013). Moral judgment evolved as a strategy for choosing sides in conflicts without triggering a brawl between alliances. In the moral strategy, the observers of a conflict morally judge the actions taken by each opponent, and then they side against the opponent whose actions were the most wrong. To assess the wrongness of an action, the observer applies the moral rules that the community previously established by debate and precedent.

The moral rules, also known as moral principles, consist of categorical imperatives that single out actions—represented with verbs such as *kill*, *steal*, and *lie*—that someone *must not*, *must*, or *can* perform, creating prohibitions, duties, and rights (DeScioli, 2023). The rules are ranked by the severity of violations and bound by the force of the community's punishment.

When an observer sees a conflict, their moral judgment applies the moral rules to compute a magnitude of wrongness for each action and thereby determines which opponent committed the most wrongful action. To enact the moral strategy, the observer then sides against the opponent who committed the worst wrong, who they categorize as the perpetrator while categorizing the other side as the victim (DeScioli, Gilbert, & Kurzban, 2012).

When the majority of people choose sides by a shared code of moral rules, they will all choose the same side. For example, everyone may side against a murderer, thief, adulterer, or blasphemer on the basis of the action that person performed. By choosing sides according to actions, the observers can avert a collision between rival alliances.

The theory that moral judgment is a strategy for choosing sides explains a wide range of its features (DeScioli, 2016, 2023; DeScioli & Kurzban 2013). Moral rules focus on actions, such as *kill*, *steal*, and *lie*, rather than consequences,

because the actions serve as public signals to help observers coordinate to take the same side, rather than resorting to alliances (or hierarchy, another danger in conflicts). Moral rules are impartial in order to detach the choice of sides from the opponents' alliances. Moral condemnation requires evidence to assure the offender's allies of their guilt. Moral rules are bound by punishment because they are designed to trigger aggression toward an offender in order to side against them, not for cooperation or the greater good. Punishment is expected to be proportionate so that it can be agreed upon by the allies on both sides.

Importantly, moral judgment did not replace alliances and other strategies. Instead, humans evolved moral judgment as an additional tactic to consider depending on its advantages in a given situation. Among other things, someone's best strategy depends on how everyone else chooses sides, creating a coordination game with multiple equilibria, including moral strategies, alliances, hierarchy, and anti-hierarchy (DeScioli, 2016, 2023; DeScioli & Kurzban 2013).

We could continue to apply this reasoning to other facets of morality and politics. But I will mention just one more for now. The costs of alliances also explain the origin of laws (DeScioli, 2023). Laws are made from the mold of moral rules using the same concepts. Laws are moral rules that leaders have selected and ritually enacted to reinforce public knowledge of those principles for resolving conflicts. Therefore, the very substance of government—laws—comes from moral principles. Without moral principles, a society governed completely by alliances would be inhuman and unrecognizable. There would be no rule of law but only the rule of alliances. Whatever edicts the dominant alliance proclaimed would not be genuine laws but only the demands and threats of a coercive alliance. There would be no expectation or even concept that laws apply to everyone impartially. Punishment would not require evidence or trial but only the will of the prevailing alliance.

In sum, human alliances do not dispel moral principles from society. Rather, the dangers of alliances caused the evolution of moral principles and laws.

The Matter of Evidence

Although the authors built their theory from solid premises, the evidence they presented was not as solid. I say this not because I doubt that evidence can be provided but to call for future efforts to compile better evidence in a more compelling way.

In general, the evidence presented in the target article consists of many citations and one-sentence summaries of previous research. The citations provide plenty of further reading but they do not convey much substance about the evidence itself. This reflects a common weakness in research articles: Authors rely too much on citations as a substitute for describing the evidence and arguments. I read articles to learn about ideas and evidence, not only to be referred to other articles.

Particularly, much of the authors' evidence concerns the double standards summarized in Table 1. The authors

present these findings in terms of the average or majority of liberals and conservatives, rather than the exact figures. It is often unclear which quantities the authors are comparing such as within or between ideologies, what percentage hold the double standard, what percentage hold a consistent standard, and so on. Moreover, political biases are well-known so the mere fact that averages differ does not distinctively support the authors' theory. Perhaps they mean to argue that the *extent* of the double standards demonstrates the centrality of propaganda in political beliefs. If so, they should present more evidence about the *extent* of hypocrisy and not only its inevitable existence.

Second, in at least some cases I did not find support for the authors' claims when I looked up the citations. For example, the first claim in Table 1 is about conservatives' judgments of torture, which cites Norris et al. (2010) and Crawford (2012). In Norris et al., the relevant study appears to be Experiment 3 which had only 39 undergraduates to assess an interaction between ideology and the perpetrator's nationality. I generally support small convenience samples but this evidence is paper thin. The citation of Crawford (2012) appears to refer to a study on judgments of POW mistreatment by Americans or Iraqis, but this article did not break down the results by ideology, and the regressions with multiple predictors do not include the ideology by condition interaction needed to test for double standards. Moreover, the results that were reported suggest that participants in all groups judged mistreatment to be unacceptable, varying only in how much. Although it is unclear, it appears that none of the groups judged mistreatment by Americans as acceptable, contradicting the first claim in Table 1 of the target article. This also illustrates my previous point: the target article's one-sentence summary of these papers did not accurately describe the weak evidence they provide for a double standard.

Similarly, the authors claim that liberals justify discrimination against conservative groups, but the cited article, Wetherell et al. (2013), actually provides little or no support. Liberals' support for discrimination was slightly greater for conservative groups than liberal groups, but in both cases the average was less than 3 on a scale from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*), meaning liberals on average disagreed with discrimination against conservatives. In fact, neither liberals nor conservatives on average supported discrimination in this study. While one could focus on the minority who did, it is still a poor description and misleading to say that liberals justify discrimination when their central tendency was the opposite.

Third, some of the cited studies do not measure moral judgment specifically. Measures of moral judgment should use moral concepts such as "wrong," "fair," and whether an action deserves "punishment," and they should be kept distinct from judgments of personal preference, safety, efficiency, character, convention, and other things. For example, the authors cite as evidence of hypocrisy Chambers et al. (2013), who measured how much participants "like" or "dislike" different groups. Liking is a personal preference, not a moral judgment, so it cannot show moral hypocrisy. It

is not hypocritical to like apples and dislike oranges, to like acrobats and dislike clowns, or to like atheists and dislike scientologists. Dislike of a group could be judged as immoral, but that interpretation still confuses the researcher's moral judgment with the participant's. The participant's hypocrisy requires that they violated their own moral principle, which requires measuring their moral judgment. Similarly, some of the moral principles in Table 1 are not moral principles in a precise sense. For instance, "people should not be easily offended," "poor people have themselves to blame," and "foreigners are a threat to unity" are not moral principles. They may be beliefs and justifications associated with principles, such as immigration prohibitions and rights, but they are not principles themselves. Moral principles consist of prohibitions, duties, and rights, and the statements do not fit these categories.

Fourth, a claim of hypocrisy requires showing that people morally judge the *same action* differently for different people. In some of the alleged hypocrisies, the authors do not hold the action constant. For instance, the authors judge conservatives as hypocritical for saying the government should not give "free handouts" while also wanting the government to "do more to help small, working-class towns." Those two actions are not the same, in addition to being too vague to measure moral judgment. For instance, many conservatives favor work requirements for government benefits, which means the benefits are not a "free handout" but still count as "doing more." It is not hypocritical to support benefits with work requirements and oppose benefits without them.

Similarly, the authors judge conservatives hypocritical if they say Americans should be suspicious of foreigners and also that they personally believe Putin's claim that he did not interfere with the election. Again, neither opinion is a moral judgment. They are judgments of prudence and personal belief. So these opinions cannot be morally hypocritical. Even if they were moral judgments, they are not the same beliefs but differ in generality. The first is a general belief about foreigners and the second is a specific belief about one of Putin's claims. The combination is no more contradictory than believing that birds fly and penguins do not fly, or that killing is wrong and killing in self-defense is permissible. Broad generalizations do not apply to every subcategory. To show hypocrisy, researchers need to hold constant the *same action*, varying only the people involved. It is not sufficient to show different judgments for a general category and a subcategory of action.

Again, I do not doubt that extensive hypocrisy can be documented, but the target article has not yet presented compelling evidence. Some of the cited articles probably do have good evidence and that evidence should be adequately described to make the case. And more evidence can be collected using precise measures of moral judgment and hypocrisy. In fact, I expect that researchers can find greater hypocrisies than those alleged in the target article. Last, research on hypocrisy would benefit from attending to the percentages of people who are hypocritical and principled in each case. Recall that evolutionary games suggest a mixed equilibrium of hypocrisy and principle, as well as

propaganda and truth. And moral strategies are only one of multiple equilibria in the coordination game of choosing sides. These insights imply that we should attend to the quantities of hypocrisy and principle, and how these quantities vary across issues and situations.

The Propaganda of Hypocrisy

With the various examples of playing fast and loose with evidence, we might wonder whether the authors have, unintentionally, practiced a bit of propaganda themselves. Normally, I would not raise such a suspicion, but in this case it may be relevant to the authors' theory. In fact, if the authors have unintentionally exaggerated their allegations of hypocrisy, it would bolster their point about how deeply propaganda permeates the political mind.

The authors do have a motive, since their theory aims to discredit the political beliefs of liberals and conservatives. Theoretically, this motive could activate the mind's intuitive prosecutor, assembling facts to build a case against the accused. The means would be charges of hypocrisy. An audience is alert to hypocrisy because the moral strategy is advantageous only when most other people also choose it over alliances. When other people abandon moral principles to favor their allies, then the moral strategy is no longer worth it. Audiences pay close attention to charges of hypocrisy to decide whether to disregard someone's appeals to moral principles. Thus, accusations of hypocrisy serve to discredit the moral claims of an opponent. Last, the opportunity would come from the mind's creative powers of propaganda which can manufacture the appearance of hypocrisy from weak and fragmentary evidence.

My detective work is mostly meant to amuse you. But it also illustrates a point of substance, that accusations of hypocrisy are among the weapons of propaganda. Someone can falsely accuse an opponent of hypocrisy to take from them the protection of moral principles. Moreover, by falsely accusing their rivals of hypocrisy, someone can persuade their own allies to choose sides by loyalty instead of moral rules of action.

Disclosure Statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author.

References

- Barclay, P. (2013). Strategies for cooperation in biological markets, especially for humans. *Evolution and Human Behavior*, 34(3), 164–175. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.evolhumbehav.2013.02.002>
- Baumard, N., André, J. B., & Sperber, D. (2013). A mutualistic approach to morality: The evolution of fairness by partner choice. *Behavioral and Brain Sciences*, 36(1), 59–78. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0140525X11002202>
- Chambers, J. R., Schlenker, B. R., & Collisson, B. (2013). Ideology and prejudice: The role of value conflicts. *Psychological Science*, 24(2), 140–149. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0956797612447820>
- Crawford, J. T. (2012). The ideologically objectionable premise model: Predicting biased political judgments on the left and right. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 48(1), 138–151. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jesp.2011.10.004>
- DeScioli, P. (2016). The side-taking hypothesis for moral judgment. *Current Opinion in Psychology*, 7, 23–27. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.copsyc.2015.07.002>
- DeScioli, P. (2023). On the origin of laws by natural selection. *Evolution and Human Behavior*, 44(3), 195–209. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.evolhumbehav.2023.01.004>
- DeScioli, P., Gilbert, S., & Kurzban, R. (2012). Indelible victims and persistent punishers in moral cognition. *Psychological Inquiry*, 23(2), 143–149. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1047840X.2012.666199>
- DeScioli, P., & Kimbrough, E. O. (2019). Alliance formation in a side-taking experiment. *Journal of Experimental Political Science*, 6(1), 53–70. <https://doi.org/10.1017/XPS.2018.19>
- DeScioli, P., & Kurzban, R. (2009). Mysteries of morality. *Cognition*, 112(2), 281–299. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cognition.2009.05.008>
- DeScioli, P., & Kurzban, R. (2013). A solution to the mysteries of morality. *Psychological Bulletin*, 139(2), 477–496. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0029065>
- DeScioli, P., Kurzban, R., Koch, E. N., & Liben-Nowell, D. (2011). Best friends: Alliances, friend ranking, and the MySpace social network. *Perspectives on Psychological Science*, 6(1), 6–8. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1745691610393979>
- Dunbar, R. I. M. (1996). *Grooming, gossip, and the evolution of language*. Harvard University Press.
- Dunbar, R. I., & Shultz, S. (2007). Evolution in the social brain. *Science*, 317(5843), 1344–1347. <https://doi.org/10.1126/science.1145463>
- Humphrey, N. K. (1976). The social function of intellect. In P. P. G. Bateson & R. A. Hinde (Eds.), *Growing points in ethology* (pp. 303–317). Cambridge University Press.
- Kurzban, R. (2011). *Why everyone (else) is a hypocrite*. Princeton University Press.
- Marino, L., Connor, R. C., Fordyce, R. E., Herman, L. M., Hof, P. R., Lefebvre, L., Lusseau, D., McCowan, B., Nimchinsky, E. A., Pack, A. A., Rendell, L., Reidenberg, J. S., Reiss, D., Uhen, M. D., Van der Gucht, E., & Whitehead, H. (2007). Cetaceans have complex brains for complex cognition. *PLoS Biology*, 5(5), e139. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pbio.0050139>
- Maynard Smith, J. M., & Harper, D. (2003). *Animal signals*. Oxford University Press.
- Mercier, H., & Sperber, D. (2011). Why do humans reason? Arguments for an argumentative theory. *Behavioral and Brain Sciences*, 34(2), 57–74. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0140525X10000968>
- Noë, R., & Hammerstein, P. (1995). Biological markets. *Trends in Ecology & Evolution*, 10(8), 336–339. [https://doi.org/10.1016/s0169-5347\(00\)89123-5](https://doi.org/10.1016/s0169-5347(00)89123-5)
- Norris, J. I., Larsen, J. T., & Stastny, B. J. (2010). Social perceptions of torture: Genuine disagreement, subtle malleability, and in-group bias. *Peace and Conflict: Journal of Peace Psychology*, 16(3), 275–294. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10781919.2010.488164>
- Pérez-Barbería, F. J., Shultz, S., & Dunbar, R. I. (2007). Evidence for coevolution of sociality and relative brain size in three orders of mammals. *Evolution*, 61(12), 2811–2821. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1558-5646.2007.00229.x>
- Pinker, S. (1994). *The language instinct*. HarperCollins.
- Snyder, G. H. (1984). The security dilemma in alliance politics. *World Politics*, 36(4), 461–495. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2010183>
- Tetlock, P. E. (2002). Social functionalist frameworks for judgment and choice: intuitive politicians, theologians, and prosecutors. *Psychological Review*, 109(3), 451–471. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0033-295x.109.3.451>
- Trivers, R. (2011). *The folly of fools: The logic of deceit and self-deception in human life*. Basic Books.
- Weeden, J., & Kurzban, R. (2014). *The hidden agenda of the political mind*. Princeton University Press.
- Wetherell, G. A., Brandt, M. J., & Reyna, C. (2013). Discrimination across the ideological divide: The role of value violations and abstract values in discrimination by liberals and conservatives. *Social Psychological and Personality Science*, 4(6), 658–667. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1948550613476096>