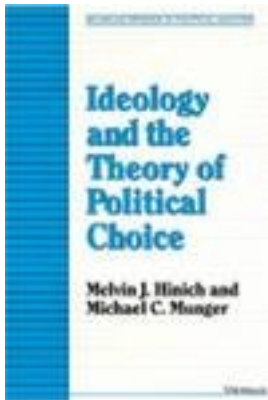


Ideology and the Theory of Political Choice



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There is no unified theory that can explain both voter choice and where choices come from. Hinich and Munger fill that gap with their model of political communication based on ideology.

Rather than beginning with voters and diffuse, atomistic preferences, Hinich and Munger explore why large groups of voters share preference profiles, why they consider themselves "liberals" or "conservatives." The reasons, they argue, lie in the twin problems of communication and commitment that politicians face. Voters, overloaded with information, ignore specific platform positions. Parties and candidates therefore communicate through simple statements of goals, analogies, and by invoking political symbols. But politicians must also commit to pursuing the actions implied by these analogies and symbols. Commitment requires that ideologies be used consistently, particularly when it is not in the party's short-run interest.

The model Hinich and Munger develop accounts for the choices of voters, the goals of politicians, and the interests of contributors. It is an important addition to political science and essential reading for all in that discipline.

"Hinich and Munger's study of ideology and the theory of political choice is a pioneering effort to integrate ideology into formal political theory. It is a major step in directing attention toward the way in which ideology influences the nature of political choices." --Douglass C. North

". . . represents a significant contribution to the literature on elections, voting behavior, and social choice." --Policy Currents

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