

When it comes to libertarians, the problem's even bigger. Research by David Boaz and David Kirby found that, while only 2–4 percent of Americans self-identify as libertarian, 15–20 percent hold broadly libertarian policy views. Thus, Haidt's theory seems to underexplain the libertarian moral character. It's like asking what liberals believe by visiting only a university English department.

It is unclear why self-identification is even necessary. Why not instead give people a list of policies, ask them to approve or disapprove of each, and from that extract a rough ideological profile of liberal, conservative, or libertarian? Then, with that identification in hand, move on to the moral questions.

These criticisms, while troubling, don't strip the value from Haidt's book. *The Righteous Mind* no doubt gets at important truths about human moral reasoning and its relation to politics. It may not get at the whole truth, but the whole truth has always been notoriously difficult to come by in either descriptive or normative ethics. Anything that moves us closer to it—and Haidt's book certainly does—deserves praise.

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Curbing Campaign Cash: Henry Ford, Truman Newberry, and the Politics of Progressive Reform

Paula Baker

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No one has yet written a detailed history of campaign finance regulation, even limited to the United States. In 1988, Robert E. Mutch published *Campaigns, Congress, and Courts: The Making of Federal Campaign Finance Law*. He then embarked on research seeking to fill out that story in the late 19th century. My own *The Fallacy of Campaign Finance Reform* combines public choice analysis with political theory in a way that historians might not recognize. Ray LaRaja's excellent *Small Change: Money, Political Parties, and Campaign Finance Reform* examines a larger historical tableau from a political science perspective. Paula Baker is apparently at work on a broader history of campaign finance and its regulation. This work began as a case study in that project and grew into a book. I look forward to the broader history, but I am happy to have this work.

Baker is a well-qualified historian. She has extensively studied and written about U.S. political and women's history. In particular, she has edited a collection of essays, *Money and Politics*, along with other scholarship on American political history. She also served as a special assistant at the Department of Labor in Washington. Her firsthand acquaintance with national politics and politicians redounds to the benefit of her scholarship. She is realistic about the motives of her subjects without falling into a casual cynicism or an unmerited idealism.

The 1918 U.S. Senate race in Michigan did not lack for characters. The desultory reader of history will likely know that Henry Ford was a man of enormous achievement and odd views. President Woodrow Wilson thought Ford would be a likely winner in the Senate contest and a sure vote for the League of Nations, despite the businessman's bitter opposition to entering World War I. Ford's eventual opponent, Truman Newberry, was the scion of a Detroit family noted more in social circles than in politics. Where Ford was difficult and demanding to all, Newberry was benign and rather indifferent to power and fame.

Neither man had a taste for politics. Having been persuaded by Wilson to run for the Senate, Ford declared his lack of interest in the job and in being a politician. For his part, Newberry did not so much run for the Senate as stand and wait while his handlers put together a majority in the Republican primary and a narrow win in the fall. The voters did not seem to mind that neither man had much to do with actual politics.

All things being equal, Newberry should have lost badly to Ford, who was known to most of the nation as a manufacturer of reasonably priced autos who paid his workers well. Newberry needed something to level the playing field with his celebrity opposition. His wealth was that something. It attracted talent to run his campaign: Paul H. King was a well-connected and extremely savvy political organizer and campaign manager, a Karl Rove of Michigan politics. King used Newberry's wealth (and that of his friends and family) to publicize his candidate. That task meant paying for advertising and flacks.

King's campaign for Newberry set new records for federal elections. Baker estimates the effort cost at least \$190,000 in 1918 dollars (or about \$3 million in current dollars). Many contemporaries seemed genuinely shocked by that sum. We would not be. Elizabeth

Warren and Scott Brown raised and spent \$70 million contesting a Massachusetts Senate seat in 2012. Spending on elections does seem to be a luxury good.

Baker indicates that while a lot of money was spent, no one did anything illegal. King ran an effective campaign that required a lot of cash to get the job done. Even so, Newberry barely scraped to victory in a state that would two years later give 72 percent of its votes to the Republican presidential candidate. He then more or less lost his seat in the courts of law and public opinion.

I found Newberry's loss in the courts shocking. At Ford's behest, Wilson's Justice Department maneuvered to get an indictment of Newberry and many others for violating, among other laws, the contribution limits in the Federal Corrupt Practices Act of 1910 as amended. In other words, the feds went after Newberry for purely political reasons. Baker also documents the prejudices and malpractice of the judge overseeing the trial. Newberry was more or less railroaded into a guilty verdict. For practicing politics, Newberry, King, and an ally were sentenced to Leavenworth for two years and fined \$10,000.

Fortunately, the legal story did not end there. Newberry appealed to the U.S. Supreme Court and won for various reasons: a fractured majority decided Congress could not regulate primary elections; the Federal Corrupt Practices Act did not apply to Senate elections; and the judge had misinterpreted the law to the jury. Newberry was free but not yet vindicated. The Senate still had to consider whether Newberry could keep his seat.

His "trial" in the Senate was, as Baker puts it, "unconstrained by courtroom niceties." Then as now, money in politics offers an irresistible temptation to demagoguery that brings some benefits and few costs to politicians. Newberry was accused of undermining democracy by spending so much money on his election. Whether his spending was inside or outside the law mattered not at all. Newberry survived the vote to take his seat, but the same Senate resolution disapproved of his campaign spending. He resigned from the Senate in the face of yet more investigations. The reform lobby had its first trophy and evidence of the potency of the issue of money in politics. For his part, Henry Ford had moved on to concerns about "the international Jew."

Baker does a fine job of placing all this in context by providing copious details without losing the thread of the larger narrative. If she were more faddish, Baker might have written about the “anxieties” fostered by the emergence of modern campaigns. Mass advertising required money that posed threats, not all from corruption. But Baker is not faddish. She is a first-rate political historian immune to fads or current prejudices about politics. Thus, we see that partisanship informed, if not caused, Truman Newberry’s problems. Cries of corruption usually had a partisan slant. True, most of Newberry’s accusers probably believed their demagoguery. As the psychologist Jonathan Haidt has noted, people are quick to rationalize their behavior and then forget they are rationalizing.

Baker also usefully notes that continual, exaggerated claims of corruption in politics tend to undermine faith in government. The modern movement for campaign finance reform certainly parallels a declining confidence in the federal government. Perhaps that is a good thing, but it is hardly the highest hope of “the reform community.”

Curbing Campaign Cash is worth reading even if you are not interested in campaign finance regulation. It is an intriguing account of an overlooked moment when modern American politics emerged at the end of World War I. Baker reminds us that what is new is actually quite old. Add to that the surprising thought that the politics of campaign finance enforcement was actually more arbitrary and dangerous at its inception than it is now. Two years in Leavenworth would have been hard time indeed for a man like Newberry. I await Baker’s broader history of campaign finance with great anticipation. It should occupy the field.

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