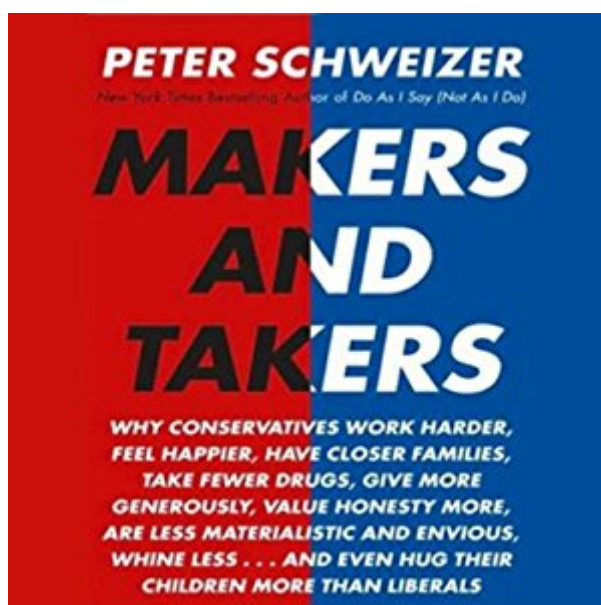


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Makers And Takers



Synopsis

In *Makers and Takers* you will discover why: * Seventy-one percent of conservatives say you have an obligation to care for a seriously injured spouse or parent versus less than half (46 percent) of liberals. * Conservatives have a better work ethic and are much less likely to call in sick than their liberal counterparts. * Liberals are 2½ times more likely to be resentful of others' success and 50 percent more likely to be jealous of other people's good luck. * Liberals are 2 times more likely to say it is okay to cheat the government out of welfare money you don't deserve. *

Conservatives are more likely than liberals to hug their children and are significantly more likely to display positive nurturing emotions. * Liberals are less trusting of family members and much less likely to stay in touch with their parents. * Do you get satisfaction from putting someone else's happiness ahead of your own? Fifty-five percent of conservatives said yes versus only 20 percent of liberals. * Rush Limbaugh, Ronald Reagan, Bill O'Reilly and Dick Cheney have given large sums of money to people in need, while Ted Kennedy, Nancy Pelosi, Michael Moore, and Al Gore have not. * Those who are every liberal are 3 times more likely than conservatives to throw things when they get angry. The American left prides itself on being superior to conservatives: more generous, less materialistic, more tolerant, more intellectual, and more selfless. For years scholars have constructed "and the media has pushed" elaborate theories designed to demonstrate that conservatives suffer from a host of personality defects and character flaws. According to these supposedly unbiased studies, conservatives are mean-spirited, greedy, selfish malcontents with authoritarian tendencies. Far from the belief of a few cranks, prominent liberals from John Kenneth Galbraith to Hillary Clinton have succumbed to these prejudices. But what do the facts show? Peter Schweizer has dug deep "through tax documents, scholarly data, primary opinion research surveys, and private records" and has discovered that these claims are a myth. Indeed, he shows that many of these claims actually apply more to liberals than conservatives. Much as he did in his bestseller *Do as I Say (Not as I Do)*, he brings to light never-before-revealed facts that will upset conventional wisdom. Conservatives such as Ronald Reagan and Robert Bork have long argued that liberal policies promote social decay. Schweizer, using the latest data and research, exposes how, in general: * Liberals are more self-centered than conservatives. * Conservatives are more generous and charitable than liberals. * Liberals are more envious and less hardworking than conservatives. * Conservatives value truth more than liberals, and are less prone to cheating and lying. * Liberals are more angry than conservatives. * Conservatives are actually more knowledgeable than liberals. * Liberals are more dissatisfied and unhappy than conservatives. Schweizer argues that the failure lies in modern liberal ideas, which foster a

self-centered, â œif it feels good do itâ • attitude that leads liberals to outsource their responsibilities to the government and focus instead on themselves and their own desires. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

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Customer Reviews

I am primarily commenting on Chapter 3, since that is the only one I have read in full so far. In addition to containing at least one outright factual error (Dr. Spock was a pediatrician, while Schweizer refers to him as a child psychologist), Chapter 3 relies way too heavily on anecdote and self-reported survey data. For example, Schweizer makes much of the fact that Ted Turner complained that some people are making "too much money too fast," but the fact remains that Turner is a liberal who has worked hard, played by the rules, and has given many millions of dollars to charitable causes. I don't really care that the man has made a few off-hand comments in support of Fidel Castro. Schweizer also comes to broad conclusions from self-reported survey data, making much of the fact that the very liberal are three times as likely than the very conservative to say that suicide would be morally justified in the event of financial bankruptcy. What to make of this? It's hard to say, since it is a response to an almost certainly hypothetical situation, yet Schweizer leaps to the conclusion that "a sizeable number of liberals" hold the view that money is more important than life itself. Hmm. Of course, one could just as easily conclude that liberals are more likely to experience shame upon facing bankruptcy, and thus more likely to consider taking their own lives as a desperate response to their situation, while folks like Donald Trump, who has filed for

bankruptcy 4 times, can continue life as a self-promoting windbag entirely free of any embarrassment from his multiple business failures. Schweizer does this over and over again, drawing broad conclusions, always in conservatives' favor, from self-reported survey data.

I've re-analyzed the surveys that Schweizer reports (which are readily available online) using SPSS 15.0. Based on my replication, there are several interesting methodological "choices" that the author makes to draw such grandiose conclusions. Even though the surveys measure political views using 'continuous' items (e.g., a response format that ranges from 1 ["Extremely Liberal"] to 7 ["Extremely Conservative"]), the author compares only the highest extreme (7) and the lowest extreme (1) throughout the book. From a statistical standpoint, this is problematic because it ignores trends in the middle and looks only at the relatively few people who place themselves at either political extreme (on the General Social Survey, this equals 4.7% of the sample, or 2,394 of 42,096 respondents; this number drops even lower when comparisons are made due to missing data in the comparison variables). Here is a representative sample of the problems this causes: On page 20 Schweizer analyzes the General Social Survey and claims that 23% of liberals and only 14% of conservatives feel that Jews are especially violent. I re-ran this analysis (using Schweizer's exact methodology) and here are the results when you examine the whole political spectrum, going from 1 (Extremely Liberal) to 7 (Extremely Conservative): 1=22.7%; 2=12.2%; 3=9.1%; 4=10.8%; 5=14.6%; 6=11.8%; 7=14.1%. See any anomalies? Hmm... That "Extremely Liberal" group looks funny, doesn't it? And it's nothing like groups 2 or 3--the folks who called themselves "Liberal" or "Slightly Liberal," respectively. The problem is that very few people identified themselves as Extremely Liberal. In this instance, that 22.7% is 17 of 75 respondents.

The argument of Makers and Takers is that conservatives have it right, behaviorally, and liberals are deeply troubled. Thus, it will give heart to the right and dyspepsia to the left, though it is written in the spirit of bemused interest, not in that of an angry screed. The core of the argument is built upon survey research. If the survey research is accurate, this is a significant book, for it traces a large number of behaviors which, it is argued, characterize those of each broadly-conceived political persuasion. Schweizer argues that behavior and ideas are closely intertwined and proceeds, he believes, to demonstrate it here. With all turning on the reliability of his evidence, there is a consistent attempt to correct for potential survey errors. For example, conservatives are more happy with their incomes than are liberals. That could be, of course, because they make more money. However, Schweizer is careful to point out, in this case, that the liberals skew toward the negative,

while the conservatives skew toward the positive when, in fact, they each make the same amount of money. Conservatives are likely to see the book as successfully and scientifically confirming their intuitions, while liberals are likely to see it as little more than polemic and propaganda. It all comes down to the reliability of the survey instruments themselves. Schweizer certainly takes them seriously, but how broadly accepted are they by dispassionate social scientists? I believe that it is a shortcoming of the book that he does not go to great pains to assure his readers (with hard evidence) that these survey instruments are reliable. There is also a great deal of anecdotal evidence, but that is notoriously slippery, though it does make for an interesting read.

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