CAMBRIDGE

Cambridge University Press
0521407702 - Reasoning and Choice: Explorations in Political Psychology - Paul M. Sniderman, Richard A. Brody and Philip E. Tetlock
Excerpt
More information

1

Introduction: major themes

One of the most striking features of the study of Americans' thinking about politics has been the submergence of politics itself. How people figure out their positions on specific issues has become a minor chord: The major chord in the analysis of public opinion, endlessly repeated, is how little attention they pay to politics, how rarely they think about even major issues, and how often they have failed to work through a consistent or genuine position on them. Why, then, ask how people make any particular political choice when the whole point to appreciate is how unlikely they are to have given it any thought?

In contrast, the argument of this book is that ordinary people do reason through their choices over a range of issues. By reason, we do not mean self-conscious acts of cerebration, merely that people can occasionally take advantage of shortcuts in judgment to figure out dependably what they favor politically. Nor should this be taken to imply that the public is well informed and politically aware. On the contrary, the whole thrust of our argument is to understand how people's modest level of political information, plus their similarly modest abilities to process it, conditions how they reason about political choices.

We write from the premise that if you want to understand how people reason about political choices, you must examine how they reason about actual choices before them. Has the eruption of AIDS excited a public backlash against gays? To what extent are Americans only giving lip service to the principle of racial equality? To what extent are they capable of making a genuine commitment to the value of tolerance? How is it possible for ordinary citizens to put together a liberal or conservative perspective on political issues and the political process when they cannot give a coherent definition of either liberalism or conservatism? How easily can people be talked out of the positions they take on an emotionally charged issue like race? Is the ordinary American prepared to treat blacks and whites alike, or are there still two standards of what is fair – one for whites and the other for blacks? These questions constitute the stuff of politics. How the public grapples with them is the subject of our book.

Our argument builds on six major themes: the revolt against minimalism, the concept of consistency, the role of feelings as well as beliefs in political

This chapter prepared by Paul M. Sniderman, Richard A. Brody, and Philip E. Tetlock.

© Cambridge University Press www.cambridge.org

CAMBRIDGE

Cambridge University Press
0521407702 - Reasoning and Choice: Explorations in Political Psychology - Paul M. Sniderman, Richard A. Brody and Philip E. Tetlock
Excerpt
More information

reasoning, the "heterogeneity" assumption, the role of education in democratic citizenship, and an account of not merely the statics but also the dynamics of reasoning and choice. All of the studies explore most of these themes, and some all of them, so a brief sketch of our major themes is in order.

THE REVOLT AGAINST MINIMALISM

The standard picture of public opinion, as our own effort got underway, was roughly this. The public's knowledge of politics was paper thin, its views on public issues arranged higgledy-piggledy, its understanding of political abstractions like liberalism or conservatism as a rule superficial or nil. Against this backdrop, it made little sense to inquire into the structure of reasoning and choice on political issues.

Following Converse's (1964) seminal study of mass belief systems, systematic analysis concentrated instead on three topics. The first was attitude consistency, understood as the predictability of a person's position on one issue given knowledge of his position on another. The second was the stability of opinions over time, understood as the consistency of preferences on political issues given the mere passage of time. The third was the so-called levels of conceptualization – a scheme for scoring the reasons that citizens give for liking (and disliking) presidential candidates and the two major political parties, to measure the quality of their political thinking. All three lines of research seemed to converge: The political opinions of the public tended to be minimally consistent, minimally stable, and rest on minimal levels of comprehension of political abstractions. To oversimplify, all three lines of research tended to depict the ordinary citizen as muddleheaded, unable to put his political opinions together consistently, or empty-headed, lacking genuine opinions altogether – or both.

Predictably, a counterattack on minimalism was launched. A number of sharp sallies were directed at issues of measurement, particularly on the assessment of stability over time (e.g., Achen, 1975; Judd and Milburn, 1980), but the frontal assault on minimalism was spearheaded by Nie, Verba, and Petrocik (1976) in *The Changing American Voter*. Not surprisingly, a furor ensued, centering on meticulous analysis of the consequences of seemingly innocuous changes in question wording (Sullivan, Piereson, and Marcus, 1978; Bishop, Tuchfarber, and Oldendick, 1978), with the counterattackers themselves thrown back on the defensive. In Chapter 2 we survey this exchange; here we want to direct attention to a piece of research, pivotal in shaping our research program.

In an exemplary study, Stimson (1975) struck out in a new direction in the analysis of constraint and complexity in mass belief systems. Rather than asking simply whether the issue preferences of mass publics tend to be consistent, he reframed the question, investigating how consistency in reasoning and choice varies with "cognitive ability." As measures of consistency he used correlation coefficients, summarized in the form of factor analyses and, as a measure of cognitive ability, combined a person's level of formal education and amount of political information: Yoking the two together, Stimson gave a strong demonstra-

© Cambridge University Press www.cambridge.org

CAMBRIDGE

Cambridge University Press
0521407702 - Reasoning and Choice: Explorations in Political Psychology - Paul M. Sniderman, Richard A. Brody and Philip E. Tetlock
Excerpt
More information

tion that the issue preferences of the most cognitively able are well organized, those of the least able only minimally so.

From our perspective, Stimson's analysis demonstrated how arguments over minimalism – and this embraces critiques as fully as defenses – were systematically misleading. The mistake was to suppose that the analytic problem was how to characterize the political reasoning of the public as a whole: It was, as he showed, misconceived to argue that the average citizen could, or could not, pull his political ideas together, because the extent to which mass belief systems are organized varies markedly and predictably across mass publics. Moreover, and this was the second major contribution of Stimson, the consistency of mass belief systems depends heavily on "cognitive factors," among them, formal education and political information.

This double contribution of Stimson opened the door for our own effort, making plain both that substantial segments of the mass public could tie their political ideas together and that whether, and how far, they did so is not a constant but varies with, among other things, the amount of schooling they have had.

All the same, the Stimson analysis was a halfway house. One way to see this point is to contrast the account of political reasoning offered for the most politically aware and the least. Stripped to essentials, it came to this: An explanation could be offered for the politically aware but not for the politically ill-informed, because the most striking feature of the latter's ideas was precisely that any given idea element has scarcely anything to do with any other. Stimson, of course, recognized that information is not an either–or proposition: It is a matter of degree. Yet the continuum, in his account, runs from well organized to poorly to hardly at all. This seemed to us a mischaracterization. The political ideas of the less well educated and the less well informed, we concede, tend to be more loosely, and sometimes even haphazardly, tied together. But it is important all the same to explore the possibility that the less well informed and less well educated, rather than simply failing to organize their thinking about politics, organize it in different ways.

One implication, supposing this plausible, is that the conventional mode for characterizing the structure of belief systems is misleading. The standard procedure is to calculate the predictability of one idea element given a knowledge of others, using a correlation coefficient to summarize the connectedness of pairs of ideas. There had been warnings about computational pitfalls (e.g., Barton and Parson, 1977), but the deeper problem is not statistical but conceptual. Belief systems, we reasoned, acquired structure through reasoning about choices. To see the structure they possessed, it was necessary to identify how people managed choices – that is, the considerations that they took into account and the relative weights they placed on them. The standard approach in effect asked: To what extent is one idea element connected to another *on the assumption the connections are approximately the same for everyone*.

From our perspective, idea elements could, and likely were, connected in a variety of ways depending upon both the characteristics of the problem that a person was trying to work through and the characteristics of the person trying to

© Cambridge University Press www.cambridge.org

CAMBRIDGE

Cambridge University Press
0521407702 - Reasoning and Choice: Explorations in Political Psychology - Paul M. Sniderman, Richard A. Brody and Philip E. Tetlock
Excerpt
More information

work it through. Political choices pose problems, and the object of political psychology accordingly is to give an account, not simply of how people recollect their preferred solution to a problem, but of how they figured it out in the first place.

The analogy to problem solving offers a clue to the organization of belief systems. To speak in terms of problem solving is to imply that political choices presented to people come organized: It would be a fool's errand to try to explain how the average person imposes a structure on political choices were they not already structured. One basis of this structure, as we argue in Chapters 5 and 8, is the dynamics of the two-party system, in competition for popular support.

But granted that political choices are organized by the structure of political competition, the question remains: How are substantial numbers of the public able dependably to figure out what they favor and oppose politically? The evidence is compelling that citizens, even well-educated citizens, tend to pay only intermittent attention to politics and to possess a fund of information about politics conspicuous for its thinness. If so, how can they work out what they favor and oppose politically?

People, we reasoned, can dependably figure out what they favor and oppose provided that they find an effective way to simplify the choices before them. A central aim of our program of research, accordingly, has been to identify some of these judgmental shortcuts, or heuristics. An example, a simple affective calculus, is set out in Chapter 3, where we suppose that one basis on which people make up their minds how to react to AIDS is how they feel toward homosexuals. Analogously, in Chapter 4, we show that one basis on which people decide whether they favor or oppose government assistance for blacks is how they feel toward blacks. The groundwork laid, Chapters 5 and 6 offer more complex versions of heuristic inference.

Partly, complexity in the analysis of heuristics is necessary to guard against overproliferation of heuristics. So in Chapter 5, we consider the example of the "desert heuristic," a shorthand rule for deciding whether a person or group deserves assistance according to whether they can be held responsible for occasioning the problem before them. On a conventional analysis, this desert heuristic then operates as a rule to simplify judgments, with people deciding that a group or person is entitled to government assistance if the problem they are suffering arose from external causes and, conversely, that they are not entitled to assistance if the problem arose from internal reasons. As we show in Chapter 5, though, this simplification is misleading, for not only do people's views about what the government should do for a group follow from their judgment about why the group has a problem but, just as commonly, their judgments about why the group has a problem follow from their views about what the government should do. Chapter 6 takes up a more positive task, offering an example of what we take to be a properly specified heuristic. Here we will only remark that it is by avoiding an argument over whether reasoning should be modeled as either affect-driven or as cognition-driven, and insisting instead on the interdependence of the two, that we transform a judgmental shortcut previously interpreted as producing mispercep-

© Cambridge University Press www.cambridge.org

CAMBRIDGE

Cambridge University Press
0521407702 - Reasoning and Choice: Explorations in Political Psychology - Paul M. Sniderman, Richard A. Brody and Philip E. Tetlock
Excerpt
More information

tion in the form of false consensus into a heuristic that yields reasonably accurate estimations of others' policy preferences.

Chapter 2 sets out our developing theory of political reasoning and heuristics. It rests on a double-winged contention: First, citizens compensate for a lack of information about political issues by relying on shortcuts in reasoning, or heuristics, and second, the heuristics that they take advantage of systematically vary according to their level of political information and awareness. This double-winged contention constitutes the heart of our critique of minimalism.

THE ROLE OF CONSISTENCY

Once the mainstream research paradigm in social psychology (e.g., Abelson, 1968), an interest in belief system consistency has largely evaporated. Partly this is because analytic perspectives in the social sciences are subject to fashion, which paradoxically ensures that ideas and arguments will fall into disrepute precisely because they have been successful. Partly an interest in consistency fell out of the analysis of mass belief systems because the characteristic they most conspicuously seemed to lack was exactly consistency.

Yet willy-nilly, in an effort to get a grip on how people reason about particular choices, we found ourselves reconsidering the role of consistency. But rather than having a descriptive goal of estimating the extent to which the elements of mass belief systems are connected one to another, our interest was to take advantage of the idea of consistency to give a causal account of how these connections arise.

Hence our interest in the so-called principle–policy puzzle, which is set out in Chapter 4. The analytic problem, as previous research had defined it, was to explain why Americans, and particularly well educated Americans, supported the principle of racial equality but not policies actually to achieve it. The usual explanatory maneuver, attributing a lack of consistency in political ideas to a lack of awareness and information about politics, was ruled out, because the slippage between support for principle and for policy was largest, not among the least educated but among the most, who are on average the most politically aware. On closer examination, the answer to the puzzle became clear: The reason the most educated failed to give as much support to policies to achieve racial equality as to the principle of racial equality is because educated conservatives in particular take exception to these policies – quite consistently, from a conservative point of view.

The analysis of the principle–policy puzzle thus taught a double lesson. First, what seemed to be an example of inconsistency – of supporting the principle of racial equality but not policies to realize it – was, more deeply considered, in fact an instance of consistency, if not between principle and policy, then between political ideology and policy preference. Second, political awareness and sophistication, so far from maximizing consistency across the board, favor constraint selectively; specifically, it is the least, not the most, educated who tend to

© Cambridge University Press www.cambridge.org

CAMBRIDGE

Cambridge University Press
0521407702 - Reasoning and Choice: Explorations in Political Psychology - Paul M. Sniderman, Richard A. Brody and Philip E. Tetlock
Excerpt
More information

maximize proximal consistency, bringing immediately adjacent elements such as principle and policy into congruence, whereas the most educated maximize distal consistency, ensuring that parts of belief systems at some distance from one another such as general ideology and specific issue preference fit properly together.

But is it not perverse to suggest that education promotes inconsistency? Consider, for the sake of argument, a voting decision about whether to reduce property taxes.[1] Define as the field of decision the range of considerations that each voter regards as relevant for making his or her decision. The size of the field of decision will covary with the level of the voter's political awareness, being more comprehensive the better informed the voter is, less inclusive the less aware and sophisticated the voter is. The relevance of considerations in the field will of course vary: The more immediate the connection between considerations and choice is, the more proximal; the less immediate, the more distal. Putting these two propositions together, it follows that the more sophisticated the voter, the more likely he or she is to take account of distal as well as proximal considerations. Given that the considerations voters take into account are not redundant – that is, are imperfectly correlated – it will frequently be the case that the less, not the more, sophisticated maximize consistency, proximally conceived. After all, the advantage of being sophisticated lies precisely in enjoying a greater chance of being aware of considerations that, though relevant for making a choice, are not immediately or obviously so.

There is also a deeper point here. As we observe in Chapters 2, 3, and 5, the structure of belief systems may analytically be defined over two dimensions: differentiation, understood as the number of evaluatively distinct dimensions of judgments that an individual takes into account in interpreting events or in making judgments, and integration, conceived as the strength of connections among idea-elements (cf. Tetlock, 1986). The analysis we offer, in Chapter 7, of judgments about tolerance illustrates the dimension of integration. The fundamental concern is to identify conditions under which the connections among relevant idea-elements are maximally detected, such that if a person accepts belief 1, she accepts also belief 2. In terms of the problem we analyze in Chapter 7, the object is to identify conditions under which people are most likely, if they accept the principle of political tolerance, to accept as well the principle of racial tolerance; and the argument we make is that consistency is obtained by judgments of similarity to a category prototype.

The second aspect of consistency, differentiation, is as consequential as the first. By differentiation we have in mind the ability to make connections between anterior considerations and a present choice: The larger the number of anterior considerations one takes into account in making up one's mind, the more differentiated one's judgment. Differentiation increases factors relevant to making a choice, by enlarging the field of decision, whereas integration decreases them, by maximizing connections across idea-elements. This duality of consistency offers a clue to a long-standing paradox of political sophistication: On the one hand, integration, by reducing the number of functionally independent considerations,

© Cambridge University Press www.cambridge.org

CAMBRIDGE

Cambridge University Press
0521407702 - Reasoning and Choice: Explorations in Political Psychology - Paul M. Sniderman, Richard A. Brody and Philip E. Tetlock
Excerpt
More information

favors simplicity of structure; on the other, differentiation, by increasing the number of considerations taken into account in making a choice, favors complexity. It only remains to remark that differentiation and integration represent not opposing tendencies – because both represent a common drive to make associations among elements of a belief system – but rather contrasting phases of judgment.

THE ROLE OF AFFECT IN POLITICAL REASONING

The studies that follow lay the foundation for a theory of reasoning and choice. We say theory not to lay a claim for the scope of what has so far been accomplished – indeed, the whole point of our surveying this set of studies both here and in the chapter to follow is to help make explicit what is yet to be worked out, both conceptually and empirically – but rather to indicate how, analytically, one thing led to another.

Skeptical of minimalism, our interest fell naturally on consistency. But consistency how construed? The obvious construction, and the one we favored initially, was of course cognitive consistency. But to construe consistency in this way only increased the implausibility of minimalism. The paradigmatic problem, from a minimalist perspective, is to assess the consistency between issue preferences, taken as pairs. Take two issues – whether the federal government should assure fair treatment in employment for blacks and whether the level of spending for defense should be increased. Citizens are scored according to their success in matching the pattern of position taking appropriate for an ideologically sophisticated voter – either favoring the first and opposing the second, or opposing the first and favoring the second. From a causal point of view, however, the solution is radically underdetermined.

How is it possible that a person could reason from a belief about, say, proper levels of federal spending to a position on the risks of pornography? In terms of manifest content, the two issues are quite independent. The reasoning must then be indirect, with positions on the two issues following not by association one with the other but by entailment from a higher-order construct. But the suggestion of deductive inference is not more plausible than that of paired association: It asks us to suppose that the positions we take on issues, so far as we arrive at them through reasoning, are the product of logical entailment. This is an excessively cerebral account of political thinking, minimizing the role of affect, or feelings, in political reasoning.

But just what is meant by the term *affect?* Three distinctions need to be remarked. The first is between state and trait: Feelings may be characterized as emotion experienced at a given moment, as when a victim of a holdup experiences fear, or alternatively, as a disposition regularly to experience an emotion, as when a person is prone to chronic anxiety. The second distinction is between qualitative and quantitative. A manifold of emotions can be discriminated, vari-

© Cambridge University Press www.cambridge.org

CAMBRIDGE

Cambridge University Press
0521407702 - Reasoning and Choice: Explorations in Political Psychology - Paul M. Sniderman, Richard A. Brody and Philip E. Tetlock
Excerpt
More information

eties of anxiety, hope, anger, esteem, pride; alternatively, quantitative considerations may dominate, with the emphasis merely on the extent to which a person's feelings are positive or negative. Finally, emotions may be diffuse, the classic example being a chronic anxiety readily excited, or focused, a selective emotional response to a specific object, say, a particular person.

To rehearse our own usage, our conception of affect falls away from state and toward trait; is quantitative rather than qualitative, and focused rather than diffuse. In assessing affect we concentrate on people's feelings toward politically salient groups – on the extent to which people like (or dislike) liberals and conservatives, for example, or on the extent to which they like (or dislike) blacks and whites – in an effort to understand how people's thinking about politics shapes, and is shaped, by their likes and dislikes.

Our aim has been to explore the relationship between affect, so conceived, and political rationality. Two discriminably different roles of affect are center stage. So far as the less sophisticated are concerned, affect can serve as a calculational crutch. In general, liking (or disliking) a particular group can supply a handy basis for deciding whether to support or to oppose a policy dealing with the group. More specifically, one way people can compensate for a lack of information about politics is to base their policy preferences on their likes and dislikes, and the less information they have about politics, the more likely they are to do so. It does not follow, however, that the reasoning of the politically sophisticated is free of affect. On the contrary, one of our fundamental arguments is precisely that a telltale feature of the politically aware is how pronounced and supportive their likes and dislikes are. Chapters 2, 3, 4, and 5 give an account of the role of affect particularly in the reasoning of the less sophisticated, Chapter 6 gives an account of its role in the reasoning of the more sophisticated.

THE "HETEREOGENEITY" ASSUMPTION AND EDUCATION

The next two themes, hetereogeneity and education, though independent analytically, run side by side empirically, so we deal with them together. The core thesis could not be simpler: People make up their minds in different ways; conversely, the insistence that people make up their minds about political choices more or less in the same way has reinforced the impression that ordinary citizens are ill-equipped for democratic citizenship.

The studies that follow put flesh and blood on this thesis. Chapter 8 presents a critique of the standard thesis of ideological innocence and a reconceptualization of the role of ideological reasoning. As usual, consistency is our starting point, in this case a striking lack of it in the thinking of the public, as reported by Conover and Feldman (1981). They demonstrate that there is virtually no correlation between people's feelings toward liberals and their feelings toward conservatives. But in what sense can citizens be said to have a grip on ideology if they do not even understand that if one likes liberals, one should at least like conservatives less?

© Cambridge University Press www.cambridge.org

CAMBRIDGE

Cambridge University Press
0521407702 - Reasoning and Choice: Explorations in Political Psychology - Paul M. Sniderman, Richard A. Brody and Philip E. Tetlock
Excerpt
More information

We want to argue not that Conover and Feldman gave the wrong answer to the question but rather that they asked the question the wrong way. It does not make sense to ask how the public as a whole reasons about political choices unless one is prepared to assume that people by and large make up their mind the same way – that is, in weighing a choice, that people take account of more or less the same considerations and attach more or less the same weight to them. But consider the problem of ideology and public opinion. Though a part of the public gets their ideological likes and dislikes perfectly crossed up, as we show indirectly in Chapter 5 and directly in Chapter 8, a part also gets them organized consistently. Moreover, the likelihood that an ordinary person will put his ideological likes and dislikes together consistently depends on the number of years of formal schooling he has had. What Conover and Feldman do is to lump everyone in the public together, ignoring the systematic variation in consistency of ideological likes and dislikes, producing thereby a portrait of political thinking that is true for the average citizen but false for most citizens.

An analogous argument is made, initially in Chapter 2 and then in detail in Chapter 7, to show that conventional representations of how the public as a whole thinks about a cornerstone value of democracy like tolerance scrambles together different patterns of reasoning characteristic of the less and more educated. Rather than rehearsing the details of the causal analysis here, we want to call attention to a normative claim, underlying many of the analyses presented in this book. That claim concerns the connection between education and democratic citizenship.

It should not count against an important idea that it has been neglected. One such idea, both important and neglected, is John Dewey's intuition about the role of schools in a democratic society. He supposed not that ordinary people started off fit for democratic citizenship but rather that they are capable of becoming so, and that in the process of their acquiring an aptitude for citizenship, one social institution looms as central: the schools.

Dewey recognized that men and women could develop their capacities outside of schools, but took the position all the same that education in democratic citizenship was doubly tied up with the educational system. On the one side, citizens acquired through formal schooling not simply relevant information they required to reason about political choices, but more fundamentally the ability to manipulate information efficiently and to gather it effectively after they had left school. On the other side, quite apart from efficiencies in information processing, schools directed the minds of citizens to certain values – among them, openness of mind, a respect for science and empirical knowledge, an awareness of complexity and possibilities for change, and tolerance, not only of people but of points of view. Dewey spoke in a mixed mood, sometimes describing how education fitted men and women for democratic citizenship, sometimes predicting how, rightly organized, education could equip them for citizenship. But whether as description or prescription, Dewey staked much on the role of education in a democratic society.

© Cambridge University Press www.cambridge.org

CAMBRIDGE

Cambridge University Press
0521407702 - Reasoning and Choice: Explorations in Political Psychology - Paul M. Sniderman, Richard A. Brody and Philip E. Tetlock
Excerpt
More information

Dewey's wager has won little attention from students of politics, and still less respect. The indifference to it is odd considering the seminal research of sociologists, among them Stouffer (1955), Selznick and colleagues (e.g., Selznick and Steinberg, 1969), and Hyman and colleagues (e.g., Hyman and Wright, 1979), who have made a strong case for the enduring effects of education on basic values, inhibiting religious and racial intolerance on the one side and promoting political toleration on the other.

Yet even the classic studies of education and tolerance, we believe, underestimate the impact of schooling on reasoning about choices. The first generation of research established that the extent to which people are committed to the value of tolerance is a function of, among other things, the amount of their formal education. Call this the main effect of education. What we are concerned to explore is the interactive effect of schooling – that is, the extent to which education not only affects reasoning about choices in its own right but also affects the way other factors affect reasoning.

Without remarking the details of the findings, we want to note that the overall line of argument has a double contribution to make. The first is causal: We want to understand how citizens reason about choices in politics, to understand, that is, what considerations induce them to make the choices they do. The second is normative: The concern here is the extent to which individuals, thanks to education, *can* do what, as citizens, they *ought* to do.

In Chapter 3, we survey the public's reactions to AIDS, investigating whether the epidemic has triggered a backlash against homosexuals. Consistent with classic research on the main effects of education, we find that the better educated a person is, the less likely he or she is to be homophobic. But it is of course also true that education does not eliminate intolerance: Nontrivial numbers of people who have had the advantage of an excellent education are homophobic all the same. But as we take pains to make clear in Chapter 3, schooling makes a double contribution: Not only are the better educated less likely to be homophobic, but even when they are, they are also less likely to base their reactions to AIDS on their feelings toward homosexuals.

Now, we certainly do not mean to claim that education is an all-purpose emollient, softening the impact of irrational prejudices: Our results on affect are consistent, applying to a variety of groups, but it does not follow that a person who has succumbed to a deep prejudice will be released from its grip merely owing to formal schooling. Nor do we intend to preempt the causal question as to just why years of formal education are correlated with reasoning about political choices. There are many possibilities, and indeed we are struck by the confidence of some who are certain that it is not education itself that is at work, but rather a factor only gratuitously correlated with it, such as inherited intelligence, income, social status, or a combination of these. Much depends on a meticulous sorting through of causal alternatives: The normative case we are making for the contribution of education to democratic citizenship would fall away if the speculation about intelligence were vindicated. And even setting aside the risk of spuriousness, it

© Cambridge University Press www.cambridge.org