

On the Two Reasons to Vote: Why the Expressive Account Is Insufficient

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Abstract: The expressive account of voting behavior is popular, but its various versions face a number of problems. I posit reasons as more fundamental than preferences and develop a theoretical account of voting behavior based on two distinct reasons. This new account goes some way at identifying the microfoundations for voting behavior and at the same time rectifies some of the shortcomings of the expressive theories.

Keywords: voting behavior, expressive theory, instrumental account, rational choice, reasons, preferences

The notion of expressive returns appears to be the best bet for those who intend to transcend the paradox—or even “irrationality”—of voting identified by rational choice accounts of electoral participation. Ever since Brennan and Lomasky (1989, 1993) introduced the concept of expressive returns to specify the non-instrumental term in Downs’ calculus of vote, explanations through expressive motivations evolved into a rich research program. Despite the continuous stream of research articles published yearly, there are still conspicuously few book-length treatments of the subject. I believe that the ambiguities at the level of microfoundations of the expressive theory may be one of the reasons for the relative paucity.

The aim of the paper is to offer a new grounding to some of the claims in the expressive theory while also rectifying a number of its weaknesses. This I do mainly through conceptual analysis of more or less abstract examples, but I also show in what ways the results can be useful for more empirically minded investigations. I intend to show that the new account based on the distinction between ‘reasons to support’ and ‘reasons to bring about’ preserves the advantages of the expressive theory over classical instrumental explanations, while avoiding many of its shortcomings. Thus, it enables political theorists to escape from the false dichotomy of two extreme claims, that the motivations of voters have got nothing to do with political results, or that only tangible policy-outcomes should figure in the calculus governing the decision to vote.

In the first part of the paper I give a brief overview of the problems to which the expressive account seems to be a better solution than the alternatives within the rational choice tradition. The second part offers a list of what I see as the most important conceptual problems,

inconsistencies and blind spots in the theory as proposed by Brennan and Lomasky (1993) and further interpreted by others. The third part introduces the notion of reasons, which—following Thomas Scanlon (2000)—I take to be primary to preferences, and explains how they relate to the problem of voting. I then draw the implications of the two-reasons postulate for the electoral calculus in general. I also show some ways in which this new distinction can augment and rectify the shortcomings of the current understandings of the expressive account of voting. In the fourth concluding part I offer my thoughts on the empirical relevance of the new account.

I The Advantages of the Expressive Account

The major difference between the instrumental and expressive accounts of voting is very well known so it does not require a detailed exposition here. In the standard rational choice/public choice framework the decision to vote issues from a calculus of personal tangible benefits measured in dollars that particular policies (or governments) confer on the individual voter. This line of reasoning follows fairly closely the original argument of Anthony Downs (1957), who already realized that the negligible chance of casting a decisive vote brings down the expected value of the voting act way below even the modest costs associated with it. It is, therefore, unreasonable for anyone to vote on the basis of her intention of making one of the candidates/parties/platforms the winner.

Most rational choice accounts share this fundamental puzzle, which cries for an explanation because empirical observations just do not support the claim and considering all participants as fundamentally deficient in rationality is a non-starter for most social scientists. All major reviews of rational choice-based accounts (eg. Grofman 1983; Aldrich, 1997) agree that the attempts to save what is known as the instrumental account are in fact doomed to failure. Whichever element of the Downsian calculus ($pB - c + d > 0$) is chosen as the focus, the problem fails to go away. The expected utility to self is always greatly outweighed by even the smallest costs of participation, so voting on the basis of making a difference to who wins is irrational. And that is a worrying conclusion not just because of the mismatch with general empirical results, but also because it has an impact on normative arguments. The Downsian justification of democracy (satisfies more preferences than other political systems) becomes questionable if the preferences that voters may have provided insufficient motivation to participate in elections that could ultimately lead to the satisfaction of those same preferences.

The expressive account of voting goes back to Buchanan (1954) and Tullock (1971), with important elaboration on the first versions of the concept by Glazer (1987). However, its present day dominant version originates in the work of Brennan, Lomasky and Hamlin (Brennan and Lomasky 1989; 1993; Brennan and Hamlin 2000). The core idea of this account is relatively simple: all consumer choices (and the Downsian calculus fits that broader group of situation) contain both instrumental and expressive components in the motivational set of the decision-makers. The expressive element is related to the identity of the agent: it is understood to motivate her because she wants to be somebody defined partly as a consumer of a particular type of good. While the most obvious example is the group of so-called “prestige goods” which consumers buy in order to express their belonging to a certain elite, almost any economic good can serve as an indicator of some group membership. What is important for the consumer in such cases is not the tangible benefit derived from the good, but rather what its possession signifies. Based on this analogy Brennan and Lomasky (1993) claim that if we generalize such motivations to the realm of electoral politics, the relevant voting action is taken purely for its own sake, not in order to effect a particular outcome. It logically follows then that the Downsian calculus needs to be modified to include the expressive element $pB - c + E > 0$ where pB is, of course, vanishingly small, so the voter participates if the expressive return E to her exceeds the cost C .

Since the expressive return is decoupled from the instrumental consequence of the action, voting lacks the appropriate disciplining force of opportunity costs. On the other hand it enables the analyst to come up with more realistic empirical predictions. The expressive account opened up the field for various interpretations and reinterpretations of electoral results and seemed to explain widespread political phenomena (e.g. voter alienation) that the instrumental account was hardly able to tackle.

II. Shortcomings, inconsistencies, blind spots

However, this elegant solution comes with a baggage of problems. The expressive vs. instrumental distinction is defined purely on the relationship to the “who wins?” question. The instrumentally motivated voter is prodded by the consideration of the *political* outcome of the election, but it is just not enough to take action. However, the political outcome need not matter to the expressively motivated voter. Her concerns are blatantly non-political in the

traditional sense: she is motivated by identifying with the candidate or party on the basis of any attribute. And on that possibly very long list of attributes policy considerations cannot figure very prominently since that would draw our voter close to an instrumental relationship to her vote-choice. On the other hand, we know that there are important political considerations, which are based on the outcome, but do not focus on the “who wins?” question. One of them is simply the overall vote-share of a candidate or party (this becomes more obvious if we consider electoral systems other than the American, say a parliamentary system with proportional representation). In short, politically minded voters might be motivated by other features of the *political* outcome, not just by the name of the winner (and politicians are fully aware of this fact when choosing their mobilization strategies).

The concept of expressive motivation runs the risk of becoming a catch-all phrase. I believe this is why the literature on expressive voting contains a bewilderingly diverse understanding of the *content* of the expressive motivation. In fact, the *microfoundations* of the account are far from clear, although almost all authors agree on the importance of clarifying them (see: Lomasky and Brennan 2000; Glazer 2008). Brennan and Hamlin (2000) essentially treat expressive choice as a choice over dispositions, which brings their formulation close to some meta-preference-based account, although they do not elaborate this point much further. Schuessler (2000a; 2000b) pins down the core of the account as a case of identity expression in the anthropological sense of the term. Glazer (2008) opts for identifying expressive motivations as betraying envy or rage. To make matters worse, in at least one case (Fischer 1996) the expressive choice is conflated with altruistic motivation. It seems that “expressive” as a technical term became almost a residual category for all sorts of motivations that are not purely self-regarding, instrumentally oriented considerations.

I contend that this expansion, or conceptual overstretch is not accidental, but rather it follows from the lack of properly argued microfoundations. (For a similar argument see Greene and Nelson 2002, though they draw different conclusions for the same line of criticism.)

Let us turn to the specific problems almost all versions of the expressive account seem to share. In what follows, I will concentrate on the expressive subset of the motivational factors, even when particular theories might endorse a plurality of motivations. In fact the claim that “instrumental” motivations are buttressed with “expressive” ones is trivial and requires little argument. It is true of all sorts of choices—consumer or otherwise—where we normally take

the instrumental motivation as the basis of our interpretation of the action. But all versions of the expressive account must *per force* claim that the source of *action* for the agent is the expressive part of the motivational set.

Whatever the actual content of the motivation, we can distinguish between two types of considerations. Any action can carry expressive value to the agent herself and to others—a distinction that has mostly been neglected by the literature (Mackie 2011 is one of the few exceptions).

If we consider first the expressive value to self, it becomes obvious even at first glance that in the political context there is always a large set of actions available to most voters, which are much more efficient from this perspective. If the agent tries to display and strengthen her political identity for herself, she can spend time and effort on learning about the candidate or the party, engage in political debates in the neighborhood, go to rallies, canvass for the candidate, etc. It is far from clear how the act of voting can supersede these alternative forms of engagement that express political identities much more obviously, be they simple or sophisticated. The same argument holds if one takes the baseline of expressivity to be expressiveness to others. Bumper stickers, flags, distinctive colors on display (and also canvassing and participation in rallies) are much more straightforward means of showing to others one's true (or assumed) colors.

There are three more important arguments that go in the same direction and show that “expressiveness” to others (or self) and the act of voting are only tenuously related to each other. First, if expressiveness to others is taken to be the most important motivating source of action then we should find nothing wrong with the following case: the citizen performs all the expressive acts but fails to turn up at the polling station on election day. Let us just register the fact that most of us would find this case odd and counterintuitive, later on I will show the possible reason for the feeling of unease in relation to this (empirically rare) kind of action.

Second, if what matters to the voter is the expressive value of the action to others, then under the rules of the secret ballot, the value of the vote itself is *entirely contingent on other expressive acts*. In the absence of bumper stickers, lapel pins, other acts of direct or indirect communication of one's political identity, the vote itself carries *exactly nil* expressive value.

Finally, if we posit as typical—and analytically basic—such voters who care primarily about the expressive value (to either self or to others), then we would be hard pressed to explain what makes those hypothetical vote-aggregation rules weird, which violate the requirement of positive responsiveness. (For the formal treatment of this desirable attribute of aggregation mechanisms see May 1952). As an example, take an aggregation rule whereby any vote for candidate *A* counts as one but it also adds *two* votes to the score of all other candidates. Similarly, but in a less dramatic fashion our posited expressive voter should find—*ceteris paribus*—no particular merit in plebiscites as opposed to consultative referenda, or even simple polls. In fact for the expressive voter the term “consultative election” would be no oxymoron.

Of course, the expressive account was not meant to be—and cannot serve as—a general normative theory about the values of democracy. It still remains a fact that the radical decoupling of electoral outcomes from individual motivations opens up a wedge in a justificatory argument if it wants to rely on the most popular account of voting behavior. After all, if no one has reason to participate in order to have an impact on the political outcome, then the ultimate argument from collective self-rule indeed becomes shaky. Unless, perhaps, there is a strong moral obligation to vote, but a disciplined argument even for that is yet to emerge.

The source of the problem, I believe, is related to Brennan and his various collaborators’ too hasty reliance on an analogy of the “double nature” of economic goods. All products or goods seem to have a mix of instrumental value (“amount of satisfaction derived from use/consumption”) plus “expressive” value (“what it says about the owner”, the “image” of the product, etc.). Even within the realm of consumer decisions we can identify goods, where this “expressive value” is considered to be more significant than the consumption satisfaction derived from it. This is true of those cases which economist sometimes call “positional goods”. Coming out top in one’s class, owning the fastest car, acquiring a secluded private beach on a desirable and popular part of the shore, membership in a highly exclusive club, etc. One extreme version of this phenomenon is the so-called Veblen goods (Veblen 1899), which display a positive price-elasticity of demand (i.e. the preference for buying the good *increases* with the increase in price). Some of the conspicuous consumption of luxury goods comes under this rubric. Notice that normally in these cases the “non-instrumental” value is expressive to others, and lately even formulated in terms of externalities (Frank 2008).

When Brennan and Lomasky (1993) (and later Brennan and Hamlin 2000) carried this distinction over to the explanation of voting behavior, two important elements of the analogy became less than clear. First, it is not entirely obvious what exactly takes the place in the new context of the good itself in the market setting. The *act* of voting, or the *result* of ones voting act (one more vote for candidate A cast by me)? If voting action is taken strictly for its own sake—as Brennan and Lomasky (1993) claim—, then it is hard to see how it resembles any acquisition of any type of good.

Second, even if economists use the shorthand of positional goods as if these were attributes of the particular goods themselves, it is obvious that the “expressive” feature has got nothing to do with any material property of these goods. This is a property of the *relation* between the actor, the good, and other actors. Anything becomes a positional good, or a prestige good entirely in virtue of the agent *considering* them as such. If expressive value in the voting act is similarly relational, then it must be subject to critical reflection; thus in some general sense a result of dispositional choice (Brennan and Hamlin 2000 comes close to this, as already noted). Then, however, the most important question seems to be the set of conditions that might have an impact in this meta-choice situation. In short, it is an admission that the microfoundations are painfully missing from the account.

Finally, let us note that the radical severance of voting acts from electoral results is partly a result of the central metaphor employed repeatedly and with gusto by Brennan and his various collaborators. It is the vision of the sport fans cheering in the stadium. The picture is indeed an evocative one for the expressive content (and motivation) of action, but there the radical decoupling between action and outcome is complete. It is not just that individual contribution to the overall noise is marginal, but the noise has no direct causal effect on the result of the game. However, in the case of voting the first is true (marginal individual contribution is minimal), but the second is not: the aggregate action is not indirectly and weakly related to the outcome, but *constitutive* of it. In the stadium case supporters take some action, but the match result is brought about by the players in the field, in voting the electoral process is *both* a method of preference expression, *and* a decision making mechanism. The complexity of the problem stems exactly from the double nature of voting.

If voters are the spectators in a stadium, then this is a curious type of sport, where the final result of the contest is uniquely determined by the relative level of noise generated by the fans on either sides. I contend that in such situations, all engaged spectators have reasons to clap their hands burning red, and these reasons are eminently related to the *outcome* of the game.

III The two reasons—a potential way out

The arguments I rely on in what follows all go back to the fundamental claims laid down by Scanlon (2000). Following his basic argument I take reasons to be primary to preferences, and believe that the desire-satisfaction model of human choices is chronically unsatisfying as the foundational theory of action.

In the Scanlonian language Brennan and Lomasky (1993) established their distinction between expressive and instrumental motivations at the level of the *meaning* of actions. However, meaning is dependent both on circumstances *and* reasons. If under financial strains one displays a preference over cost-reduction or extra effort to generate more legal income *over* robbing the nearest bank that preference—in most cases—is not a simple evaluative gut reaction. It relies on reasons, and *good* reasons at that. While it is not central to my further argument it is still important to notice, that reasons—as opposed to simple rank orderings called preferences—are criticizable, and can be agent-relative, or agent-independent.

I propose that in the realm of electoral behavior we distinguish between two types of reasons. One, which I will call *reasons to bring about* support those actions through which a change may be affected in the state of affairs, actions, which necessarily generate causal responsibility for the outcome. Let us note immediately that causal responsibility in voting need not be tied to being pivotal, therefore the overall consideration of the voter does not need to follow the Downsian calculus. The other type of reasons underwrite actions that lack this direct causal responsibility, but display the agent's favor for some state of affairs. Let's call these *reasons to support*.

It may seem at first sight that with these two concepts I just reformulated the instrumental/expressive divide, only at a different level of description. Even if this would be true, I would still maintain that there is conceptual advantage in the reformulation, as it makes more specific the respective domains. However, I believe there is more at stake than simply

re-naming the old divide. I believe that the fault-line, as established by both the Downsian and the expressive accounts is misconceived. There are a number of points on which Brennan and the standard rational choice analysts part ways, but they share the same account of the original Downsian observation on the (instrumental) irrationality of voting due to the vanishingly small probability of single-handedly changing the result.

While the claims are analytically correct, the conclusions drawn from these empirical claims rely on a rather specific view of causal responsibility. As a unique test of causal relation it offers a simple counterfactual test and claims that one can only be said to have *caused* the electoral result, if one was pivotal in the voting game. (For a classic formulation of this view on causal responsibility see Lewis 1986) Of course, this is a view that has been known to founder on those cases that are known as causal overdetermination. These are the cases where *A* and *B* both are individually sufficient for effect *E*, and where the counterfactual analysis is compelled to say that nevertheless neither of them were individually necessary, so at the end of the day effect *E* was caused by neither of them. Put in the framework of the voting game: whenever an electoral result shows a winning margin larger than one single vote, no single voter can be said to have caused it.

While it can be shown that all elements can be seen as jointly necessary which figure in at least one subset of the voters such that it contains the strictly necessary number of votes (margin of exactly one), instead of the formal analysis I would like to rely on our common intuitions. For this, let us consider one of the main examples Brennan and Lomasky (1989) used in their “large numbers” argument. (For a similar, more detailed argument see Goldman 1999)

Here they tried to turn upside down the Downsian argument for the irrationality of voting to secure a particular outcome, and claimed that exactly this non-responsibility and the “cheapness” of the vote may induce results that individuals would not necessarily desire to cause. They claim that this is especially true with other regarding malicious preferences. They construct a voting game in which some German citizens would want to “thumb their electoral nose for the Jews” and vote for a policy of persecution even if they would not necessarily want that outcome. (It is beside the point in relation to my main claim, but I also believe that Brennan and Lomasky were mistaken in their belief that the appropriate rendering of this situation as they described it is an *n*-person prisoner’s dilemma game). This argument

implicitly hinges on the background claim – not made explicit by the authors – that they would bear no responsibility for the outcome as, in all likelihood, none of them was pivotal to the result. It is true that they would bear considerably *less* responsibility for the persecution than the actual perpetrators. However, it should be intuitively clear that they should assume at least *some* causal responsibility, *certainly more than those who voted against it!* (For a more rigorous analytic treatment of such questions see Goldman 1991).

If we endorse a richer causal theory than the simple counterfactual analysis, than it should become clear that *reasons to bring about* political results via the vote could be eminently rational and action supporting, even if the probability of being pivotal to the game is infinitesimal. At the same time it is still true, that numbers matter. Agents may entertain very different considerations in a nine-member committee than at national elections.

Now the whole distinction between *reasons to bring about* and *reasons to support* is analytically meaningful only if we can conceive situations in which they part ways, support different choices of action, or one of them becomes mute, while the other carries the whole brunt of justifying a particular course of action. I believe this is eminently possible and the examples will also, I hope, show that beyond the logical possibility we may find various empirical cases which establish the social science significance of the new analytic distinction.

IV Cases, hypothetical and real

Let us take first an empirically non-significant, but still analytically interesting question. It is the vote for oneself with regard to which one can generally find two competing intuitions. One intuition would say that since one normally stands as a candidate only if one would also be willing to publicly support one's own candidacy, the same should hold for the vote, or in short: "if you don't act on behalf of yourself, who will?" An extreme formulation is, unsurprisingly, the rational choice account, which says that whenever it is feasible the only rational behavior on national elections is to "write in" your name as a new candidate. Thus the vanishing probability of winning is indeed compensated by the extreme individual gain and the Downsian calculus is saved (Tullock, 1975). The other widespread intuition goes exactly in the opposite direction, essentially saying that voting for oneself is somehow unfair, if there is any chance of being pivotal to the outcome, because in this case one would elect oneself. Even those who hold the latter view find not much to object to when presidential candidates

make the most of the photo opportunity of going to the polling booth—although no one expects that the ballot paper would be left empty or be marked at the rival’s name.

The two reasons account can make sense of these contending intuitions and accommodate the difference when numbers change. Arguably one has a significant reason to support one’s own candidacy, but there might be a moral sanction against bringing it about. *That* can be seen as appropriate only for the community to make that decision. The closer we get to the possibility where one can effect one’s acquiring an elected position single-handedly, the stronger the injunction gets. Hence in the large numbers case we have both reasons going in the same direction, while in the small numbers case we could “lose” our reason to bring about the result. At the same time we still have every reason to canvass for ourselves, and also engage in all other supportive acts (For a more nuanced analysis of this case see Meszerics 2009)

What is of significantly more importance is the cluster of cases known as “strategic voting”. Understood in the strict sense, where one votes for something other than the most preferred outcome in order to avoid an even worse result, this kind of choice simply cannot be made sense of in the expressive account. The reason is simple: a strategic vote must *by definition* be motivated by affecting the outcome, i.e. construed in strictly instrumental terms (Glazer 1987, Blais 2000). However, the rational choice instrumental account is also slightly cumbersome (Franklin 2004). When asked whether these voters act upon their preferences or not, the most frequent reply from game theorists is something close to meta-preferences: given the circumstances of the game the preferred action is something other than the one contributing to the top preferred outcome—because achieving that became unlikely (see for example Ordeshook 1992).

The two reasons account is much simpler and shows in what way reasons can be seen as underlying preferences. Strategic vote situations emerge due to the combination of the structure of the decision problem and some information advantage. This information advantage enables some players to see that they acquired *a new reason to bring about B, which they still value lower than A*, but *A* became unavailable as a result of the disposition of the other players. Voting for *A* is a feasible action, it is just unlikely to be successful in making *A* happen. Now the players have the two reasons going in different directions: they have a reason to bring about *B*, but still have a reason to support *A* in all other ways. Let us note that in this rendering of the problem the whole analysis remained focused on the political

result, no part of the argument relied on questions of identity, or other properties unrelated to the political outcome. The two reasons account explains the phenomenon of strategic voting, which expressive accounts are unable to handle. It makes a similar argument to the instrumental account, but because it assumes partial causal contribution as generating causal responsibility it does not necessarily run into the free-rider problem.

We can now construct a hypothetical case which is similar to Brennan and Lomasky’s “snubbing the Jews” stylized situation, but one which is fully amenable to the two reasons account and does not posit voters who are inexplicably unaware of their collective causal responsibility for the outcome. Let us imagine a relatively young democracy with settled democratic institutions, but where all the mainstream parties, *A* and *B* who have alternated in office became profoundly corrupt. Now let us imagine a new party *C*, outside the mainstream, whose ideological commitments are reprehensible to almost all the voters of *A* and *B*, but which chooses anti-corruption as its single electoral platform. Now there could be some voters, who would find the anti-corruption message important enough, so that they decide to help the otherwise ideologically distant party into the legislature. They could want them to be there and vocal, so that their credibility on the anti-corruption front could effect some changes, but still would not want them to form a government. This is a scenario that I believe is not unlikely, and which would baffle the supporters of both the instrumental and the expressive account. However, it poses no problems to the two reasons account. In this particular situation some of the voters acquire a *reason to bring about* the legislative presence of party *C* (i.e. decide to vote for them), while they would still retain all the other *reasons to support* party *B* or *A* in any other way, thus sending a signal to the mainstream parties.

These situations, with partial voter alienation could be volatile though, precisely because the reasons to bring about are directed towards signaling and not more. I propose that his is a most plausible interpretation of what happened in Florida in the 2000 and 2004 presidential elections. If you compare the state level results we see the following data

Florida	Dem (Gore/Kerry)	Green (Nader)	Combined
2000	2,912,253	97,488	3,009,741
2004	3,583,544	32,971	3,616,515

Source: Dave Leip’s Atlas of U.S. Presidential Elections <http://www.uselectionatlas.org>

While in the absence of panel data any strong conclusion would be unwarranted, it still seems to be the case that if the voters of Ralph Nader were mostly expressively motivated (eager to display their green identity), then we cannot easily explain the two-thirds drop in absolute numbers by 2004. Voters understood in the Downsian tradition would have been irrational to vote for *any* candidate, even if this was one of the closest fought elections in US history. However the two reasons account would go quite far and in the direction most lay-explanations would also go. So, in 2000 a large number of Democrats thought that even with Al Gore as candidate their most favored party is insufficiently “green”, so they acquired a reason to bring about a solid vote—share for Ralph Nader, while they maintained their reasons to support the Democrats in many other domains. Had they had also full reasons to support Nader (which would be then be something closer to the expressive account), we would be hard pressed again to explain why they failed then to vote for Nader in 2004. (Of course this assumes that at least a large percentage of that 65,000 votes disappearing from Nader’s electoral support in 2004 went over to Kerry). The story also shows the precarious nature of the signaling scenario in the American electoral system. The emergence of a credible third party alternative – which is the only efficient way to convey the “message” to mainstream parties – may easily “tip over” and become a spoiler for the preferred party’s candidate. Florida Democrats may have learned this the hard way.

Finally, I would like to mention a potential which is beyond the strictly conceived electoral arena, and for which the two reasons account provides a reasonable explanation. It is a well established observation that small-scale contributions tend to dry up after elections both for successful and for unsuccessful parties. Small donations, which became more and more prominent in campaign financing in the last 6-7 years should be a challenge to the analyst both in the Downsian instrumentalist and the expressivist mode. It is certainly “irrational” for the donor to think that her five dollars would have any perceptible effect on the campaign, much less on the final result. Still though, if the donation was purely expressing the identity of the donor, than we would be at a loss to explain why she would stop supporting the party in this way once the polling stations close. However, the two reasons account would take this as the eminent case where during campaign time both the reasons to support and the reasons to bring about a much desired result buttress each other, while the second group of reasons are automatically extinguished once the political result becomes public.

Of course, all this presupposes that marginal contributions to either the electoral results or the campaign coffers serve as genuine motivations to act. Strictly speaking the two reasons account does not establish this effect because it operated at the level of reasons, and human action seems to be a much more complex phenomenon, where motivation may not automatically issue from reasons alone. However, I believe it is fairly consistent with what voters have been saying about their own understandings of their springs of political action ever since social scientists have bothered to ask them.

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