Goodness

In the last chapter we saw how people adopt political positions to signal to others that they want to be their friends or to be involved in reciprocal relationships with them. We saw that it is credible that the signaler will be more trustworthy toward those whose political position he imitates than toward others. But a person can also use political positions to signal in two other ways.

First, one can signal trustworthiness to some members of one's group by an alternative to imitation. One can be either a practitioner, enforcer, or advocate of group morality. All of these activities involve a cost, though the cost is somewhat different for each. For the practitioners the price is obvious—not getting the private returns from violating those mores. Enforcers who use ostracism pay the cost of avoiding relationships that could be of benefit to them. Public advocacy of group morality has obvious time and money costs. But there are two other costs. First, advocacy of morality raises the cost to the advocate of his violating the morality. He would not only be guilty of the sin itself, but of hypocrisy, in effect lying about his behavior by publicly opposing such behavior. Second, advocacy of group morality reduces the advocate's relations with violators of that morality.

These two costs generate a dual signal from morality advocacy. One of these signals is similar to charity signaling. Instead, however, of paying a money cost to indicate trustworthiness, morality advocates pay a conditional cost—a greater cost if they violate group morality and are exposed. This greater cost would be justified only if it revealed to others that the moralizers were more trustworthy. In addition, moralizers are more likely to practice group morality. Such practice is a signal that moralizers place a high value on reciprocal relations. But moralizers also signal that they do not wish to have reciprocal relations with violators of the social rules. This makes them more trustworthy to members of the group who do not violate the rules. We call this dual signaling *morality signaling.*

It is clear from the foregoing that morality signaling increases the

trustworthiness of the signaler to his fellow moralizers. Both of the signals produced by morality advocacy generate that result. For others the two signals send conflicting messages. The part of the signal that is analogous to charity makes the signaler more trustworthy to everybody. But the part that is a condemnation of immorality makes the morality signaler less trustworthy to the immoral. Which of these messages dominates probably depends upon the nature of the reciprocal relations involved. For close friendships morality signalers are unlikely to make good partners with the immoral. If, however, the relations are less intimate, such as the relations between employer and employee, the greater generalized trustworthiness of the morality signalers would tend to dominate.

Second, there is a signal of quite a different character, and the one on which this chapter focuses. A person can use political positions to signal general trustworthiness as opposed to trustworthiness within one's narrowly defined group. We call this *goodness* signaling.

The thesis of this chapter is that goodness is asymmetric for an important set of issues: redistribution to the poor, and environmental and educational expenditures. That is, one signals goodness by advocating more government expenditures in these areas, but signals its opposite by advocating less expenditures. Furthermore, for these issues there is no morality signaling generated by advocating less expenditures. Though virtually unexplored in the literature—Sowell (1995) is a rare exception—rough versions of our idea are popular. The "do-gooder" label is often assigned to liberals by their foes, usually with a touch of derision. It is interesting that even conservatives recognize that many liberals are signaling goodness by way of political positions that the conservatives find objectionable. When it comes to name calling, "do-gooders" is one of the more benign ways to denigrate a foe.

The processes producing asymmetry for these issues will be examined later. So too will be the process producing what we call "two-sided" goodness—issues where goodness signalers take the opposite position from morality signalers. Before we do this, however, we want to model the political decision process with asymmetric goodness. It will be easier to understand asymmetric goodness knowing what it involves.

Political Positions as Signals

The model we employ is simply an extension of the imitation model developed in the last chapter. The mathematics are in appendix 3. An

individual adopts a political position to maximize utility derived from three sources: (1) narrow self-interest—the gain to his self-interest in having his self-interest realized; (2) the signaling returns from imitating his friends; (3) the returns from signaling—goodness.

Two features of this decision process should be noted. (1) As previously explained, narrow self-interest returns should be small because of the free-rider problem. (2) The political positions of others are endogenous variables determined by the same process determining the original individual's political position. Others get a return from imitating the original individual's political position. The big impact of imitation on the reduced form is to make a person's political position a function of the narrow self-interest of others and their preferences for goodness.

In consequence, it does not take a very big goodness effect for the goodness of oneself and others to play an important role in determining political positions. The only rival to goodness in determining equilibrium outcomes is narrow self-interest with its small returns. Furthermore, even if one does not signal goodness, one's political position is not goodness free. It is affected by the goodness of the others imitated.

The gain to a person signaling goodness by way of political positions is that some others find that person more trustworthy. For the signaling to differentiate people there must be some cost, or everybody would have an incentive to so signal. For standard charity the costs are obvious: the money or time costs of the charity. Our model of voting behavior reveals the implicit costs of goodness. To buy more goodness, one buys less of the other two components determining political positions. Because of the free-rider problem, people get little return from public political positions motivated by narrow self-interest. Hence, the major cost of goodness will be the possible loss of valued friends.

That cost will produce a signal of generalized trustworthiness because those who use the signal wish more relations with people in general at the expense of relations with their closest associates. That wish by itself makes the "do-gooder" more likely to be a good reciprocator in general at the cost of being a poorer reciprocator for his closest associates. For example, a high-income person advocating more redistribution to the poor would be rightly seen as more trustworthy in dealing with the poor and the middle-class, but less trustworthy by the rich. He would be less likely to do a favor for his fellow rich just because they were rich, and more likely to ignore income in determining whether he would do a favor for others.

Two signals seem to be generated from one's political position: (1)

with whom one wishes to associate, and (2) how much one wishes to specialize in one's associates. Therefore, some ambiguity in the signal would seem to be created. It will often pay the signaler to use some key word, like *compassion,* along with his political position to indicate that the deviation from his most wanted friends' political position is attributable to goodness rather than a desire for a different set of friends. Though this can mitigate the signalers' costs, it will not eliminate them, because his desired friends will still believe that he is willing to sacrifice their interests in favor of more general social interests.

Long-Run Equilibrium in Mores

For both charity and goodness "good" causes are determined by what social rules—mores—define as good causes. For standard charity it is irrelevant to the individual's survival which cause gets his dollars, holding constant the signaling efficiency of a cause. Similarly, an individual's survival is not affected by the cause he chooses to display his "goodness," holding constant, again, the signaling efficiency of the cause. The causes selected will be those that mores promote as "good" causes.

But how are mores determined? First, we try to answer that question for long-run equilibrium. However, it is unlikely that long-run solutions will be sufficient because an important determinant of long-run equilibrium—group selection—operates so slowly.

The first requirement for the persistence of a social rule is that it can be enforced at least to some extent. In this section we want to focus on the formulation of social rules rather than their enforcement. For simplicity, we shall assume that the social rules with which we deal are enforceable. For a wide range of social rules that assumption is not preposterous. In primitive societies enforcement often came through ostracism. As discussed in the section "Reciprocity and Other Social Pressure" in chapter 2, the conditions of primitive society made that a particularly effective enforcement mechanism. In modern societies the police power of the state has taken over much of that enforcement role.

Primitive and modern society also differ in the way social rules are developed. In contrast to primitive societies, modern societies determine more social rules by laws that in turn are constructed by some formal government mechanism. The long-run equilibrium most relevant for purposes of predicting even contemporary behavior is probably the long-run equilibrium associated with hunter-gatherer societies, since those were the societies that existed throughout most of man's

history. However, at the level of generality at which we are working, it doesn't matter whether we are dealing with primitive or modern society. The informal development of social rules in the former can be thought of as an analogue to voting. While it is more usual to think of social rules just as givens, they originated somehow. The past will play an important role in determining both voting and the informal choice of social rules. But the past decision process should be like the present. As seen in the last chapter, imitation produces long lags in both voting choices and the choice of social rules. In long-run equilibrium past decisions will be the same as present decisions. So social rules are determined by some weighted average of what individuals want the social rules to be, whether we are dealing with primitive or modern society.

In determining long-run equilibrium in social rules in any society two processes are at work. The first is either voting or an analogue to voting. The appropriate model of that process is the same as the model we previously used. There are, again, three components in the utility that individual's maximize: narrow self-interest, imitation, and goodness or moralizing.

The second process is group selection. Competition between societies makes some social rules grow in coverage relative to others as long as there is variation in those social rules. Narrow self-interest by itself is insufficient in that competition. We shall detail later in this chapter the differences between decisions based on narrow self-interest and on maximizing group survival. But the winning social rules require the right amount of goodness and moralizing.[1] That is why they enter into the voting process in the first place. Group selection not only determines the amount of this signaling; it determines its contents: what issues will be used for signaling and which side of each issue signalers will take.

From Externality Correction to Goodness

As stated before, the process by which mores maximize group survival must be consistent with the maximization of individual survival as well. That not only requires equilibrium in the sense that once the maximizing mores are in place there is nothing within the system to make the mores change, but also that the equilibrium is attainable from likely starting positions.

Begin with a goodness-free society: only present and past imitation and narrow self-interest are involved in determining the "votes" for the mores. In terms of the last chapter, the imitation component of one's

political position—in this case one's position about the mores—is determined by minimizing a weighted average of some function of the difference between one's own political position and two other terms: the political positions of all associates whether close or distant and the political position that maximizes one's own narrow self-interest. In that chapter the weights a person used were determined by the relative importance of the associates to that person. And, indeed, there is something natural about such weights. However, such a weighting pattern is not required. All that is required is that a person use the weights that other people believe he is using.

Look at a special case of imitation that is likely to operate. People have frequent interactions with a limited set of friends and occasional interactions with a lot of people. In this situation we can break their signaling into two components: they imitate their friends to signal trustworthiness toward them, and they signal goodness to signal trustworthiness to everybody else.

Since these components can be in conflict, the weights people give to these respective groups is important. Suppose that people start with the natural weights defined above with others believing that those are the weights. Will those be the equilibrium weights? Not if societies vary in the weighting pattern both used and believed to be used. Specifically, look at the weights given to poor distant associates and to rich distant associates. There is an external benefit to redistribution from rich to poor generated primarily by the positive but diminishing marginal value of income in increasing prosocial behavior and decreasing anti-social behavior. This external benefit in redistribution to the poor, generates a narrow self-interest return to the nonpoor in such redistribution.[2] Clearly, people would have to guess at this effect, and one would expect different societies to make different guesses.

Compare three societies: one that guesses that the impact of this externality is somewhat lower than it really is; one that guesses right; and one that exaggerates the impact somewhat. There are two forces affecting the fate of these guesses. The first is any tendency of wrong guesses to be later corrected—utility maximization. The second is group survival, which in this context is the only survival that counts.[3] If externalities were the only impact of income distribution on group survival, group survival would work exactly like mistake correction. But externalities are not the whole story of group survival, as we shall shortly see. Presuming that at the margin an extra dollar transferred from rich to poor adds to total survival, we would expect societies with more redistribution to grow relative to societies with less.[4]

Both information and survival eliminate the guess that underestimates externalities. But these forces conflict in determining the winner between the overestimate and the right guess, as long as the overestimate leads to redistribution equal to the group survival maximum or less.

The expected amount of redistribution could fall somewhere in between the externality correction optimum and the group survival maximum depending on the rate at which mistakes in the former are adjusted compared to the rate of change produced by group survival. We know that group selection moves slowly. But mistake correction also occurs at a snail's pace. The necessary information is hard to come by, and individuals have little incentive to either find the information or act on it if they do.

The most interesting feature, however, of mistake correction is that it too is influenced by survival. The expected redistribution is somewhere in the range between an externality correction optimum and a group survival maximum. Hence, a society can push the solution toward survival maximization by minimizing the rate of mistake correction in judgments about externalities.

Society has a simple device that does exactly that at no survival costs to the individuals who use it: emotional reactions about redistribution. These are what Loewenstein (2000) has called "visceral factors" that propel behavior in directions that differ from those dictated by careful weighing of long-term costs and benefits. Instead of calling for greater externality correction, plead for greater compassion. In both cases individuals would be signaling their goodness, so which plea would be employed is a matter of indifference to individual decision-makers. But the "compassion for the poor" cry is less prone to correction. The origins of such a soul-searching cry in externality correction are so disguised that it can hardly be criticized for overdoing a job that it doesn't seem designed to do. In consequence, a society that gets emotional about redistribution to the poor is likely to grow relative to a society that does not. The equilibrium amount of redistribution would be closer to a group survival maximum.

(Many social scientists [for example, Frank 1988] have rationalized emotions in terms of individual survival. We use instead a group survival argument. But the logic of the two approaches is the same when group survival does not conflict with individual survival.)

It is conceivable that the disguise for externality correction is so thorough that redistribution in long-run equilibrium would be exactly equal to its group survival maximum. It is also possible that it will be less than that because some mistake correction goes on in spite of that

disguise. For simplicity, in the rest of this book we assume that long-run equilibrium is at the group survival maximum. But all that is important for our purposes is that group survival maximization is a component of long-run equilibrium. For example, we would expect asymmetric goodness in the case of redistribution to the poor. One signals goodness by advocating more redistribution to the poor, not by advocating less of this redistribution.

To make the argument tangible we have focused on a particular issue involving group selection, but the same analysis can be used for any group selection process that also involves externalities, and all seem to do so.[5] The foregoing suggests that that relationship is not accidental. Because the appropriate amount of externality correction is so hard to estimate, externality correction is an obvious source of mistakes in utility maximization. Some source of mistakes that lead to different social decisions is required for survival processes to have an impact.

Group selection, then, is crucial in determining how much goodness in political positions is required to signal generalized trustworthiness. But the reverse is true as well. Goodness signaling is required to produce mores that maximize group survival out of individual behavior that is interested solely in individual survival.

Long-Run Equilibrium in a Democracy

What will long-run equilibrium entail given a democratic government? The voting process determining political positions is similar to the analogous voting process determining the mores. Of course, because "voting" about the mores does not involve a secret ballot, public pressure is likely to be more important in mores formation than in voting. Conscience is likely to be more important in voting than in the mores. Moreover, there also can be a difference in the weights each individual has in determining final decisions. However, one gets the same result in long-run equilibrium whether goodness is defined by an equilibrium political outcome or by equilibrium social rules. The details of the voting processes are irrelevant. In both cases goodness is determined by that which leads to political decisions that when applied lead to outcomes that maximize group survival.

To determine the equilibrium goals of goodness, we must determine differences between voting decisions without goodness and survival-maximizing decisions. For the latter we will focus on the survival of the group making the decisions: roughly the number of long-run descen-

dants.[6] This statement ignores the full impact of intersociety competition. Social rules maximize the number of people in the long run following those rules. Acculturation and conquest are other ways to extend these numbers. But for present purposes we simply focus on increasing the descendants of those following the rules.

There are two big differences between voting outcomes without goodness and policies that maximize group survival. First, what individuals want is different than that which maximizes their survival. What individuals want would determine their nongoodness voting decisions, while what maximizes their survival would be a component in the maximization of group survival. Second, the weights given to individuals in determining group survival are different than the weights determining voting outcomes.

In chapter 2 we saw that individuals maximize expected utility over their lifetimes. Concern with their children's welfare is built in to their own utility, but not built in enough to maximize the survival of their genes. Instead, social rules take up the slack, forcing people to invest more in their children than they would do just from altruism directed toward their children.[7] To achieve that result "do-gooders" advocate greater expenditures for child care in the form of education, day care, child nutrition, child safety, and so forth.

Consider redistribution. Others have discussed the externalities in redistributing income.

1. Insurance (Bishop, Formby, and Smith 1991; Overbye 1995). Risk-averse individuals would prefer a more equal distribution of income to a less equal distribution, so they run less risk of large declines in their income in the future.
2. Social cohesion and stability (Piven 1971; Hirshleifer 1994). Crime and riots are quite possibly a function of the degree of income inequality. But these externalities do not require goodness signaling for their correction, since utility-maximizing voters can do the job.

However, maximizing group survival requires maximizing the expected number of a group's long-run descendants, ignoring intersociety effects. The marginal survival return of a dollar to a poor person is substantially higher than this marginal return to a rich person. The impact of dollars on mortality rates in particular diminishes with increases in income. To maximize group survival ignoring externalities, redistribution should occur until this positive effect is balanced

by the negative effect due to the deadweight losses associated with redistribution.

Deviations from Equilibrium I

Current mores are unlikely to correspond perfectly with long-run equilibrium mores because of the substantial difference in the hunter-gatherer world and our own. Group selection moves quite slowly in comparison to the rate of environmental change. Conceivably, a society could develop context-dependent mores: mores that specify behavior conditional on the environment. Cosmides and Tooby (1992) argue that the mind is adapted to handle reciprocal relations independent of their content. But that does not generate completely flexible social rules. There is no individual return to adjusting the goals of signaling in response to environmental change, since those goals are produced by group survival rather than individual survival. We expect some environmental changes that are not fully anticipated by mores. There was no survival return in the past in anticipating future environments such as the industrial revolution.

Instead, there is a simpler, though less efficient adjustment of the mores to environmental change: there is some flexibility in the mores. The social rules permit some changes in the social rules. But these changes in the social rules will only be roughly related to group selection over any time period too short for group selection to operate.

Economists have always been more confident in analyzing equilibrium than deviations from equilibrium, and that is true for us too. But the equilibrium generated by group survival takes such a long time to be realized that deviations from equilibrium are likely to be particularly important determinants of "goodness." While our discussion of the long-run equilibrium mores should hold for any society, our discussion of deviations from equilibrium is much more society-specific. We focus on the United States. Without the pressure of group selection, there is much more room for variation in social rules country to country. Nevertheless, we believe that certain patterns in these mores grew quite naturally from the equilibrium mores.

A standard source of deviations from equilibrium is lags. In chapter 5 we discuss why there are long lags in the signaling process of voters and present evidence for those lags.

Widespread government involvement in aid to the poor and externality correction is largely a twentieth-century phenomenon. Achieving survival maximization without an active government requires a

much bigger goodness effect built into mores than achieving it by way of government. Moral pressure has to be large enough to overcome the free-rider problem associated with voluntary contributions. Not only would the required moral pressure need to be greater, but the issues requiring goodness to achieve survival maximization would differ. One function of charity is to fund activities with external benefits like health research or environmental amenities. Some people bear the cost, while others share the benefit. But people now vote to fund these expenditures. People vote for others and themselves to share the costs of externality correction just as they share the benefits of that correction. Goodness pressure is no longer necessarily required to correct for externalities qua externalities when that correction comes through government action.[8]

However, we would not expect an immediate full adjustment in the "good" causes. Once a convention gets established that determines how one signals goodness, that convention will die slowly. It would not be surprising if notions of goodness that developed in a world of little government still had some force in a big-government world.

There is one big difference between this deviation from equilibrium and the long-run equilibrium solution in determining the goals of goodness. Externality correction is an important goal of charity, but it would not be a goal of goodness in long-run equilibrium, because voters would engage in the appropriate amount of that correction without goodness advocacy.

In addition this lag would reinforce some of the long-run results. The externalities in helping the poor provide another reason for "do-gooders" to advocate more redistribution. We expect government to already correct for this externality. But given lags in goodness advocacy, we would expect "do-gooders" to imperfectly adjust to this new reality.

Deviations from Equilibrium II

There is another possible discrepancy between goodness signaling and group survival: the emotional content of goodness signaling. As discussed earlier, that emotion got self-interested individuals to choose social rules that maximized group survival in the past. But those emotions may not produce the same result in a changed environment.

One of the emotions that has contributed to group survival in the past is compassion. We have seen that compassion for the poor produces the redistribution that increases group size. Compassion for chil-

dren who obviously require care helps generate social rules that would produce the survival maximum amount of child care in long-run equilibrium.

But the objects of compassion seemingly are not sufficiently specified to ensure that that emotion always contributes to group survival. Even within the environmental variation faced by hunter-gatherers, there was need for variation in social rules about sharing. Big-game hunting was an important determinant of sharing rules (Wright 1994), and its relative importance varied considerably among groups. At the same time, the costs of such flexibility were limited at this period in man's history critical to the formation of preferences. The group that was targeted for compassion was clearly defined—the tribe. Under those circumstances, there was little survival benefit to specifying the emotion further because there were few occasions for those emotions to go astray.

But now our society consists of groups potentially defined in many ways. Generalized compassion no longer is guaranteed to contribute to group survival. Who, then, will be the objects of compassion? There must be some convincing basis for a claim to either pity or helplessness, some analogue to the case of the poor or children. Typical objects of compassion are groups whose average real incomes are low who obtain group preferences even for members whose real incomes are high. Ethnic groups who have been mistreated in a society even though their average income is high might also induce compassion. Misinformation can also induce misplaced compassion. Union members can be viewed as Davids battling business Goliaths even though economic theory suggests that union gains are at the expense of poorer nonunion workers. Would the substantial prounion sympathies among nonunion workers continue to exist if they were aware that union gains were at the expense of their poorer compatriots?

Nor do we claim that compassion provides the sole basis for governmental redistribution. The rent-seeking behavior of special interest groups has been well documented (for example, Stigler 1971; Krueger 1974). However, most of the success of these groups depends upon stealth, the lack of general public awareness of their gains. And just as in the union case, whenever possible these groups try a compassion argument. "Pity the poor farmer." "Pity the worker whose jobs are protected by tariffs." Stigler showed that when the government distributed quotas, smaller firms obtained a larger share of those quotas than their output would have justified. Though the compassion argument is loose, the evidence suggests that at least as far as redistribution

through government taxes and expenditures is concerned, that redistribution is on net toward the poor and away from the rich (Browning and Johnson 1984).

But this variety of compassion claims must not always have convinced, or compassion would have developed immunity from such claims by the survival process. A complete theory of goodness signaling would predict the time stream of such successful claims, but such theorizing is well beyond the confines of this book. We are content to note the current successful claimants for compassion in the United States, all of whom have some characteristic that will trigger that emotion.

Long-Term versus Ephemeral Goodness

Some may find the preceding discussion of the goals of goodness unsatisfactory. We claim that all of them originated to maximize group survival. But certain compassion-driven goals have the opposite effect. Hence, there is no simple relationship between goodness and group survival.

There are, however, some ways of testing our theory linking the goals of goodness to group survival. First of all, we maintain that the compassion-driven goals of goodness that are contrary to group survival have a common property. They coexist with goals that do contribute to group survival and have the opposite impact on political choices—goals produced by morality signaling. In contrast, all the goals of goodness without conflicting morality signaling contributed to group survival, at least at the time that these preferences were being formed.

We have also alluded to a second difference between goals that contribute to group survival and those that do not. The former have been around for a long time. In contrast, those goals contrary to group survival of necessity could not have stood the long-term test of time. It is instructive to examine the evidence, if only briefly.

First, look at the redistribution of income toward the poor. As we have seen, this policy is required by group survival in hunter-gatherer societies, so it has been around for a long time. It appears that this goal is opposed by the principle of taking responsibility for one's own actions. We claim, however, that this latter "goal" is simply self-interest at work in the voting process. The disincentives associated with any other rule create substantial deadweight losses. Anthropologists have frequently noted food sharing among primitive tribes. Posner (1980)

and Wright (2000) explain this voluntary food sharing by the absence of government and the insurance motivations previously discussed. Such an externality of food sharing certainly contributes to group survival in the absence of government. We contend that the amount of food sharing is greater than the amount demanded by simple externality correction because of food sharing's other impacts on survival.

The most obvious cases of food sharing seem to occur for big game. It is obvious why big game is shared. It is too much for a single family to eat before it spoils. The hunting may also require large-scale cooperation, but the sharing usually goes beyond the cooperating group. What is less obvious is why any male would bother to hunt for big game rather than hunt for smaller game, when his expected meat consumption, as opposed to meat production, is greater in the latter case. The anthropologists' answer is that the big-game hunter parleys his greater food sharing either directly or indirectly into more sexual favors: directly by trading choice cuts of meat for sex, indirectly by demonstrating skills and obtaining prestige that ultimately leads to more or better sexual partners (Ridley 1997).

This could very well be a straightforward case of sexual selection where each partner is directly better off in terms of survival as a result of the pairing. At least among the Ache, a hunter-gatherer people in South America, the children that are the product of sex with big-game hunters have a better chance of surviving either because their genes are better or because they get special treatment (Wright 1994).

Alternatively, a more subtle kind of sexual selection emphasized by Fisher (1915) in a more general context would be required. The mate of the big-game hunter might have had even more surviving children in another partnership given her superior genes. But suppose females in general prefer big-game hunters. Then the male children of big-game hunters are more likely to successfully mate as long as they are more likely to be big-game hunters themselves through either training advantages or inherited roles.[9]

Sharing, then, seems to have been a very early feature of man's development. The payoff to that sharing appears to be enhanced reputation, which has an evolutionary return of more or better sexual partners. It is not clear, however, at least in the most primitive of sharing arrangements like big-game hunting, that the enhanced reputation of sharers is closely related to an increased reputation for greater trustworthiness. Sharing the big game is no evidence of trustworthiness in other relationships, since the hunter has no alternative but to share. However, the hunter often does not reserve for himself or his family the

very best cut of meats (Ridley 1997). This sacrifice only makes sense in terms of an increased reputation for trustworthiness. Furthermore, those who choose to specialize in big-game hunting might do so because they have more to gain from relationships with others. These are, indeed, the most trustworthy.

Greater opportunities for signals for trustworthiness occur for charitable contributions in an agricultural society. Long-term storage of foods is feasible and money has been invented. Under those circumstances sharing does imply real sacrifices that can signal greater trustworthiness. There is evidence of charitable giving among the Jews of the biblical era (Domb 1980) and in the Greek city-states (Constantelos 1991). There was also a system of public relief in Athens (Constantelos 1991).

Child Care

We have seen that group selection demands social rules that generate more child care than would be produced by utility-maximizing individuals absent social rules. The latter give less weight to the future than is appropriate for the survival of their own genes. Here, too, we find social rules in the distant past as well as in the present that encourage child care, and we find no opposing goodness or morality goal.

The most important social institution increasing child care is the family. It insures in the traditional monogamous family that two parents will be participants in child support and rearing. The family is required because at least some males find it in their interest to have sex without the accompanying parental responsibilities. Women would be better off, as would their children, if they could enter into a long-term contract: "No sex without shared child care." Marriage is such a contract, which used to be enforced by assorted social costs of breaking the contract.

The availability of marriage makes women better off and men worse off, ignoring the future of their genes. In primitive societies, which are not notably feminist, that redistribution of income could hardly explain social enforcement of marriage. What does explain marriage is that children would be better off given this long-term contract.

However, the problem of the predatory male thus solved would be a possible problem even if both men and women were totally future oriented in their decisions. It might pay males, even in terms of genetic survival, to have multiple sexual partners (Wright 1994). The children

of such males lose child care, but there will be more of them. Such men gain quantity of children at the expense of quality.

There is, however, a feature of the marriage institution in most past societies that cannot be explained if both men and women were totally future oriented: the moral opprobrium associated with having children out of wedlock. The fallen women is not simply a figment of Victorian novels. Such opprobrium, obviously, cannot withstand a high proportion of violations, as is the case in the contemporary United States. In the absence of rape, sex involves the voluntary choices of both man and woman. Hence, the genes of a totally future-oriented woman would be better off with whatever sexual choices she makes. Why should the community object if she chooses to be a single mother? There are two possible reasons. First, the community might have to subsidize the subsequent child care. Second, it might object to the reduced quality of the child. In either case the community is interested in child care beyond externality correction. Similarly, the community often places obstacles to divorce by mutual consent. The obvious explanation is community concern with the fate of the children that are involved.

We do not expect serious survival errors in parental decisions about food and shelter for the child given that the child is still dependent on the parents. There is maternal food sharing with the young for all primates. The appropriate behavior in this regard would be part of built-in preferences. What distinguishes man from his forebears is the longer time period of child dependency and the more complex training required. We would expect parents to give less than survival-maximizing weights to child welfare in both of these decisions. We would, therefore, anticipate some social intervention to set the weights aright for those societies that survive.

One solution to the less than all-encompassing interests of the parents in their children is to make the child finance his education. Hence, the development of the apprenticeship system. But that system only worked when the trainer was the employer, so the child could pay for his earlier training by providing later work at less than its marginal product. More general training, in particular for training in reading and arithmetic, often was provided by the community or charitable organizations, especially after commercial developments in the fourteenth century made such training more useful (Adamson 1930). There is, then, a long history of community involvement in child care in western Europe.

One way the society increased child care was to increase the payoff to individuals in producing higher-quality children. The community encouraged children to take care of their parents in their old age. "Honor thy father and thy mother" is the only one of the Ten Commandments of a nontheologic nature that encourages, rather than proscribes, a behavior (a "do" rather than a "do not"). We interpret this command to mean in part, "Help your parents in their old age." This behavior makes no sense from a survival point of view if individuals were maximizing their own genetic survival. Directly, it makes no survival sense under any circumstances, since the aged contribute nothing to future generations. Indirectly, it makes lots of survival sense, given man's dominant concern with his own well-being. If one expects one's children to provide social security, one will provide better child care to increase the probability that the child will be in a position to help them later.[10] Care for the aged seems to be an ancient social rule and one that currently faces no opposing rule of goodness or morality.

Health

Helping the sick and injured is another mark of goodness that appears to be a feature of primitive as well as modern societies. This feature of goodness also has no opposing goodness or morality signal. To some extent caring for the sick and injured in primitive societies requires no encouragement from social rules. Self-interested behavior of individuals would produce some health care from others who would be interested in their own future health care. This is simply reciprocity in operation. However, individuals discount the future and are uncertain about the probability that the present sick will be in any position to help those that help them. As a result, reciprocity without general reputational gain will tend to provide less health care than people want. In consequence, there is a greater external benefit to greater health care than would emerge from simple reciprocity. This external return generates mores that make advocating more health care a signal for goodness. In primitive societies this external return occurred without any state. The optimal level of health care required goodness signaling.

The Environment

As we saw earlier, group survival requires some social restraints on individual behavior because of both externality correction and the overly high discount rates used by individuals in their decisions. Both

concerns would make environmentalism a "good" cause. But the record of social response to environmental problems is, as far as we can see, spotty. Property rights internalize some of the externalities, those consequences of one's actions confined to the property over which one has been given rights. But those property rights will not protect against overly high discounting of the future. Nor will they protect against consequences that go beyond the property in question.

As a result, there have been many ecological disasters attributable to man's actions. One such case is the extinction of large mammals such as the wooly mammoth in Eurasia, and of many species in North America after man's arrival (Diamond 1997). The extinct mammals seemed to have one common characteristic. Their range was wider than any tribe's territory, so that no one tribe could control their fate.

Even when a social group is large enough to effectively control some feature of the environment, it does not always succeed, as witnessed by deforestation in Ireland and the Easter Islands. On the other hand, there have been successful controls over the use of natural resources without individual property rights (Ostrom 2000).

There is one important difference between the environment and both redistribution to the poor and child care expenditures as far as group survival is concerned. Spoiling the environment need not have had much impact on group survival given the nomadic character of most hunter-gatherers. Even when they could not move, the worse the environment, the less it attracted competing groups. Failure to care for the environment, then, would result in fewer of the social group, but that group would not be obliterated by competing groups. There is, then, less survival pressure to come up with appropriate environmental decisions than the other decisions that we have looked at. In consequence, one would not expect environmentalism to be as dominant a part of the social fabric as child care and redistribution to the poor.

We suspect that the main attraction of environmentalism is derivative from other "good" causes: concern for health and concern for long-run consequences, especially those consequences that affect future generations. There is one way of distinguishing this derivative hypothesis from a direct group selection origin of environmentalism. Information could be important in the first case, but not in the second. In the first case, knowledge of the health and long-term consequences of environmental policy is necessary to determine that policy on the basis of those consequences. In the second case, group selection does not require that the participants know that a social rule works. It only requires that if the rule works, it survives. We have the sense that a cru-

cial catalyst for the environmental movement has been information about the environmental consequences of pollution, information that came to the fore in the latter half of the twentieth century. Of all the "good" causes that might contribute to group survival, environmentalism appears to be of most recent origin.

Compassion for Poor Groups

The amorphous quality of "compassion" as a goal seemingly makes it applicable to groups other than the poor, as long as there is some sense in which the group is more unfortunate than others. One example: racial preferences without regard to individual income to minority groups whose members are on average poor. Such preferences make no sense in terms of the group survival rationalization of aid to the poor. Holding individual income constant, one would not expect the marginal survival returns of income to be greater for, say, blacks rather than whites. That is why Kuran (1995) finds an enormous private opposition to affirmative action. There is, however, a special externality rationale for special aid to poor minorities. There is a big imitation component of rioting and criminal activity. Members of isolated poor groups are more likely to harm others than members of richer groups, even holding individual income constant.

There is one problem, however, with governmental policy acting on the basis of this externality. Suppose that aid to a group increases with the antisocial behavior of that group. Then the group can increase that aid by engaging in antisocial behavior. This consequence of the attempt to correct for this externality may or may not outweigh the direct effects of externality correction.

Sowell (1990) provides cross-country evidence that either this externality or compassion toward poor groups did, indeed, influence government policy. He found several cases where redistribution was from rich majority groups to poor minority groups. He found no cases of redistribution from poor majorities to rich minorities when both participated equally in the electoral process.

In spite of the possible externality returns in aiding poor minority groups, this ethnic preference is of relatively recent origin. The reason is obvious. If it exists, the externality return only means that the richer group benefits somewhat from benefits to the poorer. It does not imply that that benefit is greater than the costs of having less income for themselves. When the poor minorities are not adequately represented

in the electoral process, the richer majority will exploit them. This, too, seems to be supported by Sowell's results.

For either reasons of compassion or externality corrections, majorities and minorities alike consider aid to poor minorities a "good" cause, at least in the United States. But there is a conflicting cause for all, other than poor minorities: own-group preferences. Since this latter cause had survival value in the past, it has been around for a long time.

General Compassion

It, however, is apparently "good" to be "compassionate" toward groups when there is not even an externality rationale for doing so. The "good" support preferences for women, pacifism, criminal rights, and oppose discrimination against homosexuals, though, as we shall see, that support is greater publicly than privately. These positions can easily be explained by compassion. Women make less on the job because of home responsibilities. People die and are maimed in wars. Homosexuals are often mistreated. Being in prison or electrocuted is not considered fun. However, these compassions do not contribute to group survival.

Wars have had a big impact on group survival. Groups have been wiped out by their conquerors. But wars have more than just a genetic effect on group survival. The social institutions of the defeated are often destroyed even when the population is allowed to live.[11] The evidence of Diamond (1997) suggests that in very primitive societies losers in wars were wiped out except for nubile females. He asserts that only in fairly advanced societies were the losers allowed to live, usually as slaves. Pacifism was clearly not a winning strategy for group survival in the ancient world, when preferences were being formed. Simple prisoner's dilemma models suggest that it is not a winning strategy against tit-for-tat even now (Axelrod 1984), though many claim the issue to be more complicated than that. There is little evidence for pacifism in the ancient world, though there are some isolated cases, such as Aristophanes' *Lysistrata.*

On the face of it, homosexuality does not increase group survival, though some have argued that some degree of homosexuality is optimal to increase the amount of child care per child. That mores are usually opposed to homosexuality, however, suggests that group survival would be greater if the amount of homosexuality were less.[12]

Nor does compassion for criminals increase group survival. There is some evidence (Ehrlich 1975; Ehrlich and Liu 1999) that an increase in capital punishment reduces murders by more than the number of people executed. If so, group survival increases with more executions. It is also unclear whether the "humane" treatment of criminals promotes group survival. Torture is a more cost effective way of deterring crime than that imprisonment which would lead to the same amount of deterrence. At the very least, if group survival were one's sole goal, prisons should be made more unpleasant, especially since that is cheaper. Clearly, something other than group survival is motivating the compassion for criminals that make these options almost unthinkable.

Compassion focused on criminals rather than the victims saved is an example of a more general quirk in the operation of compassion. It is considered more important to help a given person than to provide that help to somebody yet unspecified.[13] While such a phenomenon now makes no sense from the point of view of group survival, it is explicable historically. The friendlier one is toward a person, the more one knows about him. During the period when preferences were being formed, one knew mostly only close associates. Special concern for them makes sense in terms of reciprocal compassion. Information media now make one know a lot about selective strangers. It is not surprising that people extend them the emotions developed for friends.

Women have a newfound role in the labor force produced by lower birth rates and labor-saving devices at home. However, women still bear the brunt of housework. As a result they have less prestigious jobs and are both overworked and underpaid (in some nonmarginal product sense; that is, males with which they associate make more). These grievances generate a women's movement where there is no comparable men's movement. These grievances and the women's movement making the population aware of these grievances have added compassion for women to the "do-gooders" arsenal of compassions. On its face, however, it would appear that feminism is not conducive to group survival. Feminism tends to reduce both the number of children and the amount of child care—the latter by encouraging women to work outside the home. Furthermore, there is no external benefit generated by preferences for women. Neither the insurance nor the social stability argument would generate special treatment for women. Few men change sex, nor are women more likely to riot than men.

The particular women's issue that we examine later in our statistical analysis is abortion. Compassion is two-sided in that case: compassion for women versus compassion for the unborn. But the compassion bat-

tle is only part of the story. Simple self-interest as distinguished from genetic self-interest leads to a proabortion position. In point of fact, the advocates of "family values" tend to oppose abortion, though it increases child care per child by reducing the number of unwanted children. But it could have indirect effects that operate in the opposite direction. By encouraging sexual activity outside of marriage, it reduces the number of marriages.

We have seen that all the compassions in this section are contrary to group survival. In consequence, we expect their importance to be a recent phenomenon. Pacifism is now marginally acceptable. In the past, wars, for example the Civil War, were unpopular among segments of the community, but not widely opposed like Vietnam. There have been pacifist plays in the past, but not the bevy of antiwar plays that began in World War I. Group survival in the past required the group to be willing to fight for its territory. Even now, patriotism vies with pacifism for emotional appeal. Similarly, women's rights vies with the group survival advantages, at least in the past, of the gender division of labor. Women did not even get the vote until the twentieth century. Concern for the well-being of criminals vies with the group survival advantages of strict law enforcement. It is not surprising that gallows day was a major source of entertainment in an earlier epoch.

Compassion for poor ethnic groups is also a recent phenomenon for a different reason. If it has external benefits, it has survival value for societies that are ethnically diverse. But for most of man's history societies were ethnically homogeneous. A strong sense of preferences for one's own ethnic group has survival value under those conditions, especially since one of the main forms of encounters with strangers was in war.

The material in this section supports the contention of Posner (2000) and Kuran (1995, 1998) that there are multiple signaling equilibria. Current goodness signaling in the United States is not uniquely predictable from group survival. However, the range of possible causes that could generate goodness signaling is not unlimited. Not all causes qualify on the grounds of either lags or compassion, seemingly the sources of deviations from group survival signaling.

Symmetries and Asymmetries in Goodness

When compassion conflicts with group survival, morality signaling generates opposite goals. Patriotism is contrary to pacifism. Similarly, some regard homosexuality as a sin worth fighting against. "Law and

order" advocates oppose criminal rights. Advocates for family values engage in morality signaling in opposition to the feminists. For those issues goodness is two-sided.

But for those issues where compassion is not opposed to group survival, and is in some cases on the side of group survival, goodness is one-sided. These issues include the environment, the redistribution of income to the poor, and child development. It is clear how compassion contributes to survival maximization in these cases. Compassion is also relevant in defense of environmentalists. Pollution hurts the sickly, and compassion for animals is used by environmentalists, though that compassion is largely unrelated to the features of environmentalism that contribute to group survival.

Most of the interesting results we get are related to these cases of the asymmetric distribution of goodness. And these are also the cases in which economists have been most interested. When goodness is one-sided, its role in the political process is more easily detected.