



# Empathy Imperiled: Capitalism, Culture, and the Brain (SpringerBriefs in Political Science)

By gary olson

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## Empathy Imperiled: Capitalism, Culture, and the Brain (SpringerBriefs in Political Science) By gary olson

The most critical factor explaining the disjuncture between empathy's revolutionary potential and today's empathically-impaired society is the interaction between the brain and our dominant political culture. The evolutionary process has given rise to a hard-wired neural system in the primal brain and particularly in the human brain. This book argues that the crucial missing piece in this conversation is the failure to identify and explain the dynamic relationship between an empathy gap and the hegemonic influence of neoliberal capitalism, through the analysis of the college classroom, the neoliberal state, media, film and photo images, marketing of products, militarization, mass culture and government policy. This book will contribute to an empirically grounded dissent from capitalism's narrative about human nature. Empathy is putting oneself in another's emotional and cognitive shoes and then acting in a deliberate, appropriate manner. Perhaps counter-intuitively, it requires self-empathy because we're all products of an empathy-anesthetizing culture. The approach in this book affirms a scientific basis for acting with empathy, and it addresses how this can help inform us to our current political culture and process, and make its of interest to students and scholars in political science, psychology, and other social sciences.

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### **Editorial Review**

From the Back Cover

Empathy is putting oneself in another's emotional and cognitive shoes and then acting appropriately. The evolutionary process has given rise to a hard-wired neural system, described as "the most radical of human emotions, that equips us to connect with one another. But this critical connection has been short-circuited by the dynamic convergence of culture, politics and the brain under the hegemonic influence of neoliberal capitalism. The book explores this process through sections on education, the neoliberal state, neuromarketing, corporations, militarization, mass culture, film, photo images and media. How does the system blunt, bracket off and or otherwise channel empathy's revolutionary potential? What does this reveal about how the world works and especially, how it might work better? Empathy Imperiled offers a provocative, empirically grounded dissent from capitalism's narrative about human nature. It offers a unique perspective on our current political culture and process and as such it will appeal to students and scholars in political science, psychology, anthropology, and several related fields.

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