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## **BOLETIN DE PSICOLOGIA**

Número Monográfico

## NUEVAS PERSPECTIVAS EN AFECTIVIDAD Y EMOCIONES

Coordinadores: Darío Páez y Andrés J. Carbonero

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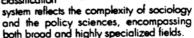
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## POLITICAL BEHAVIOR

## Volume 17, Number 2

**June 1995** 

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## UNDERSTANDING COURT NOMINEE EVALUATION AND APPROVAL: Mass Opinion in the Bork And Thomas Cases

James G. Gimpel and Lewis S. Ringel

This article explores public opinion formation in reaction to the controversial nominations of Robert Bork and Clarence Thomas to the U.S. Supreme Court. When asked to justify their approval of disapproval of these well-recognized nominees, an interesting pattern emerged. Citizens opposed to the nominations tended to

cast their arguments in terms of ideology and specific issues. Supporters, however, called attention to the nominee's character, abilities, achievements, or some notion of deference to the president. We speculate that this asymmetry in responses is traceable to the content of the elite debate. We conclude by discussing the implication of these findings for presidential nomitation strategy.

#### BLACK AND WHITE PERCEPTIONS OF PARTY DIFFERENCES

James M. Glaser

Despite a comparative disadvantage vis-à-vis whites in resources like education that often are considered to lead to political sophistication, African Americans show signs of being a rather politically sophisticated group of people. Given that better educated people are much more likely than those with less education to see larger differences between Democrats and Republicans, the propensity for blacks to perceive larger differences between the parties, both in general and on specific issues, is striking. This puzzle is explained by the fact that education has a huge impact on seeing partisan differences for whites, but not for blacks. That this understanding of the structure of Americans politics has so completely penetrated black public opinion is quite remarkable. Strenght of partisanship, and to a lesser degree, racial cconsciousness, appear to be largely responsible for blacks (particularly less educated blacks) perceiving such stark party differences.

## THE IMPACT OF LEGAL CONSTRAINTS ON VOTER REGISTRATION, TURNOUT. AND THE COMPOSITION OF THE AMERICAN ELECTORATE

Glen E. Mitchell and Christopher Wiezien

Research on the effects of restrictive voter registration laws has been largely passé for nearly a decade, apparently due to the widespread acceptance of Wolfinger and Rosenstone's (1980) study of voter turnout. Wolfinger and Rosenstone's research indicates that fully liberalized registration laws would produce a larger voting population, which would differ only marginally in its composition from the existing electorate. But their analysis only addresses turnout, not registration itself, and is based on a single sample of the American electorate, 1972. This paper focuses on the impact of restrictive laws on registration and turnout in presidential and nonpresidential election years during the period 1972-1982, relying on data from both the U.S. Census Bureau's Current Population Surveys and the National Election Studies. The results of the analyses do mark important points of difference from Wolfinger and Rosenstone's findings. Ultimately, however, there is no escaping their conclusion that the implications of liberalized voter registration laws on the composition of the electorate would be relatively minor.

# PATRONAGE AND CITIZEN GROUPS: A Reevaluation

#### Antony J. Nownes

It has been more than ten years since the publication of Jack L. Walkers's seminal article «The Organization and Maintenance of Interest Groups in America» (1983). This brief essay reexamines some conclusiones Walker reached in that study. Specifically, it takes a fresh look at Walker's data (which have recently become available through the ICPSR) and raises questions concerning how patronage is defines. The article also argues that to understand patronage we must consider that patronage may have a different impact on different types of groups. Ultimately, the article represents an attempt to futher illuminate the process of citizen group development.

#### ASIANS—A MONOLITHIC VOTING BLOC?

## Wendy K. Tam

Past studies of Asian voting behavior have mmore often than not treated Asians as a single homogeneous group. Based on this assumtion, the studies proceed to predict Asian voting behavior. However, the underlying assumption of homogeneity can produce fallacious results when the group Asians is not homogeneous. In fact, it is often the case that the separate ethnicities act as separate groups with their own unique political perspectives and identities. Hence, studies of Asian voting behavior should be careful to consider the effects and consequences of such aggregation.