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**POLITICAL
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Abstracts

Political Behavior, Vol.13, N° 1, 1991

ISSUE AVOIDANCE: EVIDENCE FROM THE U.S. SENATE

Martin Thomas

This research considers whether there is evidence of legislators' issue avoidance, or unwillingness to reveal one's position. It links, for the first time, two important areas of inquiry: legislative decision making and issue avoidance. The data describe senatorial behavior over eighteen years, involving approximately 200,000 individual voting decisions. During that time, senators were polled by CQ after each missed roll call, and asked to indicate their positions. Issue avoidance is a subset of the nonresponses to that poll. A conceptual model of voting and position taking is presented, incorporating both behaviors and intentions. It defines two kinds of issue avoidance: "proactive", deliberate avoidance at the time of the roll call, and "reactive", avoidance decided on after votes missed inadvertently. Application of the model permits inferences about intent. Proactive avoidance accounts for 12% of nonvoting during the terms' first five years. It also represents 40% of failures to reveal positions. As much as another 19% of nonvoting results in reactive avoidance. A sixth-year increase in issue avoidance is indicated, although not conclusively. The findings strongly suggest that models of legislative voting should be amended to account for both proactive and reactive avoidance.

URBANIZATION AND VOTER TURNOUT IN KOREA: AN UPDATE

Jongryn Mo, David Brady, and Jaehun Ro

In this paper we develop an econometric model to test whether alienation and/or mobilized voting explain urban-rural turnout in Korea. We find that a person's decision to vote is influenced by the act of mobilization and that it affects rural residents more strongly. But we do not find that the feeling of alienation affects a person's decision to vote. Thus, we find support for the mobilized voting hypothesis, but not for the alienation nonvoting hypothesis.

STRONG FEELINGS: EMOTIONAL RESPONSES TO PRESIDENTS**Lyn Ragsdale**

Although rational models of political behavior prevail in research on public approval of presidents, an emotions model is proposed to consider whether it actually predicts approval as well as, if no better than, the existing rational models. The emotions model is tested for Presidents Carter and Reagan using the American National Election Studies from 1980 to 1986. The model is compared with two rational models: one, an events and conditions model, suggests that people's prospective and retrospective views of their own financial circumstances and the economy dictate their approval of presidential performance; a second, an issue proximity model, proposes that the closeness (or distance) people perceive between their views on key issues and those of president affects their approval of the president's job. Across numerous tests, the results indicate that the emotions model outperforms either of the rational models. In addition, a multivariate analysis combining rational and emotional indicators shows the strength of the emotions variables. The study concludes that political science research must more fully consider rational and emotional explanations of political behavior.

**ATTITUDES OF CANADIANS TOWARD AFFIRMATIVE ACTION:
Opposition, Values Pluralism, and Nonattitudes****Joseph F. Fletcher and Marie-Christine Chalmers**

Set against a backdrop of current public policy and case law, this study investigates Canadian attitudes toward affirmative action among both citizens and decision makers. We find low levels of support for such programs across a variety of context and intended beneficiaries, but we also discover that opinion on both sides of the issue is rather soft, for large portions of those taking positions on the matter are willing to reconsider their views when prompted. We interpret this finding as an indication of what Philip Converse has called "nonattitudes". Thus, a substantial portion of Canadians appear to hold no genuine attitudes on the question of affirmative action and are relatively open to persuasion. In contrast, the preferences of those with stable attitudes are rooted in the tradeoff between values of equality and merit. Implications for policy activists in this issue are discussed.

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*Abstracts***Political Behavior, Vol.13, Nº 2, 1991****HOW TO VOTE, WHETHER TO VOTE: STRATEGIES FOR VOTING AND ABSTAINING ON CONGRESSIONAL ROLL CALLS****Linda R. Cohen and Roger G.Noll**

This paper develops and tests a theory of voting and abstaining on Congressional roll calls. The theoretical model assumes that the voting behavior of legislators is oriented toward reelection, and that constituents vote retrospectively. Among the predictions of the theory are that supporters of a program are more likely to abstain than opponents, that conflicted legislators are more likely to vote on the losing side (but will abstain when the vote is very close), and that indifferent legislators will abstain when votes are not close but trade their votes when the outcome is uncertain. The empirical test is based on a series of votes on appropriations for the Clinch River Breeder Reactor from 1975 to 1982. We estimate a nested logit model of first, the probability of voting for Clinch regarding the program. All of the empirical results are consistent with the theoretical predictions, and most are statistically significant by conventional standards. The implication is that the abstention decision, as well as yes or no votes, can be purposive, and that the pattern of abstentions is not random among supporters and opponents.

**RECONSIDERING POCKETBOOK VOTING:
AN EXPERIMENTAL APPROACH****Lee Sigelman, Carol K.Sigelman, and David Bullock**

Despite its deep theoretical roots, the idea that voters reward or punish incumbents in national elections for trends in their personal financial circumstances has not fared well when subjected to empirical test. This paper poses an experimental test of the leading explanations for the surprisingly weak showing of pocketbook influences on vote choice. According to certain of these explanations, the answer lies in distinguishing between sociotropic and self-interested economic voting, or between retrospective and prospective economic voting, or between perceptions of economic trends in general and perceptions of the electorally relevant component of these trends. However, expectations based on these explanations are generally not borne out in the laboratory setting.

Consistent with the observed pattern of effects, however, is the idea that pocketbook voting displays little independent impact because economic perceptions and attributions are epiphenomena --strongly biased by the voter's preexisting political commitments.

POLLING EFFECTS IN ELECTION CAMPAIGNS

Darrell M. West

The effects of polls on public opinion and voting behavior have begun to attract considerable attention. However, aside from experimental studies and research on exit polls, the impact of preelection polls has not received adequate analysis. This paper investigates whether exposure to polls released during the campaign influences voter choices and how the electoral context of referendum versus candidate elections makes a difference in terms of polling effects. These questions were addressed in a cross-election comparison of the 1980 presidential campaign and a 1986 state referendum on the right-to-life issue. Basically, I found significant effects during the referendum, but weak effects in the presidential general election.

MEMORY FOR POLITICAL ACTORS: CONTRASTING THE USE OF SEMANTIC AND EVALUATIVE ORGANIZATIONAL STRATEGIES

Katheleen M. McGraw, Neil Pinney and David Neumann

This paper explores the organizational strategies used to represent information about political actors in memory, and it illustrates the usefulness of a specific measure, the adjusted ratio of clustering score (ARC), for inferring memory structure. Assuming the operation of an associative network model, we argue that information about a political actor can be organized along three distinct dimensions: attribute type (differentiating between issue positions and personal attributes), partisanship (differentiating between characteristics typical of Republicans and Democrats), and evaluative type (differentiating between positively and negatively evaluated attributes). The results of a laboratory study indicate that organization along the attribute type dimension was most common, with some evidence of partisan organization. There was no evidence of organization along the evaluative dimension. The implications of the study for understanding individual differences in political reasoning, and the consequences of memory organization strategies, are discussed.