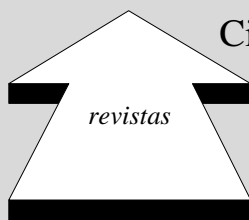


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POLITICAL BEHAVIOR

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CHANGING LEVELS OF POLITICAL INFORMATION IN 1988 AND 1990

Stephen Earl Bennett

The 1988 and 1990 National Election Studies indicate that the public is less politically informed in a low-stimulus election year than after a high-stimulus campaign. Although the same factors are responsible for what people know in each year, the process of becoming informed in an information-poor environment is slightly different than in an information-rich atmosphere. The data also show that, just as Angus Campbell's surge and decline theory predicts, «core» voters are slightly more knowledgeable than «peripheral» voters.

TOLERANCE AND SOCIAL ADJUSTMENT TO NEW NORMS AND PRACTICES

Dennis Chong

All forms of political tolerance—political, racial, religious, and social—involve a measure of social adjustment to unconventional groups, ideas, and activities. Tolerance does not depend entirely on the generosity those who deviate from society's norms. Rather it depends also on the ability of people to assuage fears and anxieties and to reconcile themselves to social change. Because people are able to adapt psychologically to changes in norms and practices, increases in tolerance are not necessarily accompanied by increases in self-restraint, social strain, or tension. Several illustrations of social adjustment drawn from diverse arenas are presented as well as a more exact dynamic model of how this process works.

LATE-DECIDING VOTERS IN PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS

J. David Gopoian and Sissie Hadjiharalambous

This article examines the behavior of voters who decide on their presidential candidate preferences within the final two weeks of the campaigns. Relying on data from American National Election Studies (ANES) for election between 1972 and 1988, we demonstrate that late deciders are different from other voters

in a variety of respects. They are less involved politically and far less predictable in their behavior than other voters. More significantly, we find that the candidate preferences of late deciders are not determined by the conventional political forces that motivate other voters. Rather, the choices that late deciders make appear to be nearly random in character. The implications of these findings for the analysis of electorates are discussed.

ARE «SUPERDELEGATES» SUPER?

Richard Herrera

Post-1968 changes in the Democratic party's nomination process resulted, by some accounts, in the selection of delegates who knew little about politics, cared little about winning, and were removed from the party following. One remedy for this situation was the reintroduction of party professionals into the process in the form of «superdelegates». Does this cure work? By examining the accuracy of superdelegates' perceptions of the party following's positions on issues compared with those of ordinary delegates, this paper addresses part of this question. Using data about the views of delegates to the 1988 national party conventions and the 1988 American National Election Study, I show that the fears about postreform delegates being more out of touch with the party following than «professionals» (i.e., superdelegates) are largely overstated.

CREATING IMPRESSIONS: AN EXPERIMENTAL INVESTIGATION OF POLITICAL ADVERTISING ON TELEVISION

Kim Fridkin Kahn and Kohn G. Geer

Using an experimental design, this paper addresses a few basic, but important, questions about the influence of televised political advertising. How effective are different kinds of political spots in creating impressions of a candidate among viewers? Do negative ads work better than positive ads in creating favorable impressions? Do spots that focus on issues create more favorable impressions than spots that stress the traits of a candidate? Do two ads work better than one ad in creating impressions? Can the effects of a spot be undercut by a follow-up advertisement from the opposition? This paper offers some tentative answers to these questions.

VOTERS' REASONING PROCESSES AND MEDIA INFLUENCES DURING THE PERSIAN GULF WAR

Zhongdang Pan and Gerald M. Kosicki

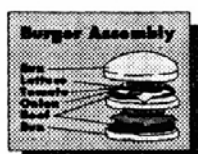
Voters engage in complex reasoning processes in deriving their policy preferences. Such reasoning processes take place in the environment of media helping to construct the discourse of an issue. To demonstrate the reasoning processes and media influences on the processes, this study analyzes the panel data gathered from a national probability sample before and after the Persian Gulf War. The results show a process of forming one's support of the Bush administration's Gulf War policies that involved feelings toward Bush, patriotic feelings, and acceptance of the official statements of U.S. foreign policy goals. These positive contributors are all related to heavier exposure to television news. Respondents' level of public affairs information and exposure to newspaper public affairs functions as a contingent factor in the reasoning processes: Those at the upper half of the scale showed a greater emphasis on ideology and negative emotional reactions to the destruction of the war in forming their support of the Bush administration's Gulf War policies. The importance of the homogeneity in the discourse of the issue is further demonstrated by the effects of the news media exposure on higher likelihood of dissent concerning the end of the war.

INTERRELIGIOUS CONFLICT IN ISRAEL: THE GROUP BASIS OF CONFLICTING VISIONS

Kenneth D. Eyal and Samuel Shye

Utilizing several theories of sociocultural mobilization, this paper examines the contours of secular-religious conflict in contemporary Israel. According to a survey of adult Israelis, resistance to «religious coercion» among the secular population is driven primarily by symbolic, social, and cognitive forces rather than perceived discrimination or the threat posed by spatial proximity to the religious. As such, it is rooted in cultural identity. The theocratic disposition among religious Israelis is almost entirely a matter of social identification. These findings both confirm existing theories of intergroup conflict and suggest a framework for analyzing religion and the state controversies in other politics.

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